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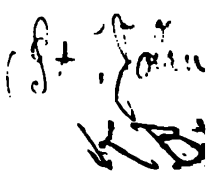
THERE AND BACK AGAIN

IN SEARCH OF BEAUTY.

VOL. II.



LONDON
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THERE AND BACK AGAIN

IN SEARCH OF BEAUTY.

BY

JAMES AUGUSTUS ST. JOHN.

An ignis fatuus that bewitches,
And leads men into pools and ditches.
HUDIBRAS.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THERE AND BACK AGAIN

IN SEARCH OF BEAUTY.

CONTINUATION OF PART III.

XXIII.

No one, perhaps, has yet succeeded in describing to the life a calm at sea; it is so monotonous. One may possibly be able to explain one's sensations during its continuance, though even that seems doubtful. It is the negation of motion, almost of life. Beyond the deck on which you stand there are only three objects visible—the blue sea, the bluer sky, and the fiery sun rolling through it.

For a time these inspire you with the most sublime ideas; you seem to have got within the serene halls of eternity. Everything is still, silent, unruffled, tranquil and beautiful as death; and you appear, as you gaze around, to be absorbed in a delicious dream, from which you never desire to awake. The ineffable serenity of the heavens infuses itself into your soul, which becomes impregnated, as it were, with a celestial joy not translatable into language.

The "Black Eagle" seemed anything but an eagle now. It lay like a log upon the waters, where not a ripple was discernible. Then it was that I beheld, in all its beauty, the sapphire blue of the Mediterranean, which looked like another sky, equalling in serene loveliness the sky above. The sun's wake appeared like a glittering line of fire, drawn over a metallic surface. Yet even at such moments there is a pulse in the sea, which throbs, and pants, and heaves under the influence of the attracting luminary overhead. Perhaps, also, the earth's motion may have something to do with the everlasting agitation of the waters.

At night the prospect from the ship's deck possessed marvellous fascination. By I know not what process, patches of the sea appeared to be bathed in moonlight, while dark shadows here and there enveloped other portions of it, and gave them the appearance of islands dotting a luminous ocean.

When clouds came, white and ghost-like, to vary the face of heaven, they added wonderfully to the charms of the scene. Sometimes they seemed to descend in columns to the edge of the deep; and through the clear, open spaces between them, you looked far away, as it were, into another creation, where figures of light and beauty, winged and wreathed with amaranth, alighted on the pearly waves, or emerged from them heavenwards, like Thetis or Leucothea, when ascending to the court of Zeus.

Then I understood the meaning of the "silver-footed queen;" for the mother of Achilles was only a personification of the sheen of the sea when it has been lulled into ineffable slumbers by the breath of night, and the moon walks over it like a fairy power, making it glad in its sleep, and pouring visions on the eyes of all beholders.

XXIV.

From the birth of time to the present hour, men have gazed at night into the heavens as towards an oracle, always on the point of making revelations, which it never makes. Standing alone on the deck, I looked up at the celestial host, marching eternally, in silence, towards some unknown goal. There were Orion and Boötes—the Pleiades ever searching for their lost sister—and the blazing planets, and stars of the first magnitude, wheeling beyond the moon. The Homeric passage on the night projected itself at once into my mind, and for the first time, perhaps, in my life, I felt its entire truth.

One other thought I had which must be common to all men. While contemplating those eternal orbs, I felt myself to be eternal, like them. Though surrounded by all that is transitory—though resting on the lap, as it were, of the everlasting type of vicissitude—I raised my ideas to that immeasurable elevation which the empire of change does

not reach. For the moment, the perishable communed with the imperishable, and there was between them a deep sympathy, as between God and his creatures.

I fancied there must, in all those bright stars, be beings like me looking across the measureless gulfs of space towards this loved planet, the earth, which is our mother and our nurse, and the tomb that covers our ashes when we have ceased to be sentient beings. Where goes then the thing that thinks, the divine breath which broods over the sea of matter, and makes it pregnant with thought, speculation, ambition, and love?

In the depth of my heart, I interrogated the power which seemed to hover above me in the vault of heaven; but there was no response. Nature will not on such occasions come to our aid. In the dark we come into this world, and in the dark we go out of it. Still, at all times, and in all places, I feel my being to be inter-penetrated with another being of imperishable goodness and beauty; and the consciousness of this communion seems to be the best guarantee of immortality. Towards the infinite we always yearn, and then most when we are most deeply dissatisfied with the finite and the perishable.

XXV.

In this faint record I cannot restore life to the feelings which then lived in me. I looked backwards and forwards to the persons I had known and loved, and to the things I hoped shortly to see. Egypt, with all its atmosphere of antiquity; its pyramids, its subterranean palaces, its temples, its chambers of death, its palm-groves, its camels, and its deserts, and, above all, its mighty and mysterious Nile, haunted me perpetually. The very moon I then saw blanching the waves, rested that instant on the Pyramids and Libyan sands, rendering them pale and spectral, and imparting to everything a sort of hieroglyphical significance. Within a very limited number of days I should probably be among these objects, which now—like the matter of the Berkeleyan theory—existed for me only in thought.

The Bey, being unable to sleep, joined me about midnight, on the deck, where, sitting down together, we leaned against the companion, lighted our pipes, and entered into one of those dreamy conversations, which partake more of the nature of sleep than waking. I was glad, I confess, to be delivered from myself, for I had felt a sadness come over me which would not be dispelled. But Ali was not, that night, in the humour to be cheerful. We soon came to talk, I know not how, of the strange objects that must be found paving the bottom of the sea;

the treasures of ancient kings, gold and sparkling jewels, and the skeletons, perhaps, of those who owned them.

The whole channel of the Mediterranean must be strewed with human bones. Carthaginians Syrians, Sidonians, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans—there they lie, side by side, beneath the eternal waters; and the modern ship that fetches freight from Alexandria sails in its whole course over buried nations. It may be the corruption of the dead that now adds brightness to the phosphorescence of the waves.

Ali told me that in the East they have a superstition on this subject, which represents the spirits of the departed as hovering, whether on land or water, over the spots where the ruins of their earthly tabernacles are found; so that in ploughing the Mediterranean, we sail through armies of ghosts more multitudinous than the waves. These patient spirits sometimes ride on the foam, and at other times repose in those delicious little hollows, which look like excavated emeralds, between the crests of the waves. It is their union and thronging together, say the Orientals, that constitute the phosphorescence of the sea, for wherever there is spirit there is light, and the billows flash with the luminousness of vanished generations, that concentrate, as it were, the starlight on their wings.

XXVI.

Presently, one of my English friends joined us; and, by way of variety, we struck up a ditty. The Bey smoked and smiled, as we sang together the monotonous stanzas of Alice Gray.

The other passengers, in the course of a short time, followed our example; and we held a sort of midnight levee on deck, smoking, laughing, telling anecdotes and stories, and entertaining ourselves in the best way we could. Kafoor, who made coffee like one of the inhabitants of Jinnistan, brought his apparatus near us, and prepared endless cups of this delicious beverage, which diffused its fragrance around, like "Sabean odours from the spicy shores of Araby the blest, till, pleased with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiled;" joined with this perfume was that of the Gebel Latakia which descended on us like the soft and somniferous dews of Lebanon.

As, however, we made no progress all this while, everybody was internally dissatisfied. The Bey hated the sea, and used to contrast its wearisomeness with the pleasures of travelling on land.

"Imagine yourself," he said, "arriving at the close of day, on horseback, at the gates of a caravanserai. The keeper comes forth to meet you with a salutation of peace, leads your horse into the court, assists you to alight, gives provender to your beast, and, if you have no slave, aids you

in preparing your evening meal. Then prayer-carpets are spread upon the terraces, and the voices of the faithful ascend to heaven. Palm-trees nod over you, and, on the breast of the solid earth, you sink into delicious sleep, such sleep as a man tastes after the fatigue of a long journey, when wrapt in security and repose."

We all agreed in praise of the land; but supposing that the feelings of a sailor would be different, I inquired of the mate, who stood musing at some little distance from us, what he thought of the matter.

"If I had my will," he replied, "I would build myself a cottage somewhere in the recesses of the Apennines, where I might never more, during the remainder of my life, by any possibility, catch a glimpse of the sea."

XXVII.

I hate the man who quails and shivers when surrounded by danger and death; but, the moment he escapes from their clutches, smirks and smiles, and affects to have thought nothing of them. I am not a hero of this stamp. Life has always been pleasant to me, and I should be loth to lose it —most of all should I have been loth to lose it then, when a crowd of little urchins, clustering round their mother, prayed nightly for me, unconscious how near we were being parted for ever.

Besides, I appeared to be on the point of realizing one of the great dreams of my life—visiting the valley of the Nile, and experiencing all those deep and powerful emotions which such a scene must necessarily awaken in me.

People with wealth at their command may smile at this, because it would be easy for them to visit Egypt and Nubia if they could muster the courage. But that is what they cannot often muster; and if they could, they would still, perhaps, be very far from experiencing the pleasure which I knew I should feel. The world is exactly what you make it for yourself—you carry with you the source of all your joys and sorrows; and, therefore, a peregrinating grandee, with tens of thousands at his command, might not be able to extract from a year's intimacy with Isis and Osiris one thousandth part of the delight it afforded me.

To speak the truth frankly, I would not exchange the gratifications of that journey for all the barbaric pearls and gold which the gorgeous East ever showered on her kings. I had enjoyed some foretaste of this pleasure ere the storm commenced, and my imagination unfolded before me all the rest. Doubly cruel, therefore, did it seem, to be washed away, like a sea-weed, from the warm precincts of the cheerful day, when standing, as it were, on the very threshold of such a harvest of enjoyment. I called to mind Gray's lines, sublime in their touching pathos—

"For him no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees, the envied kiss to share."

Yet, when the gale began, I thought it grand, and was struck with admiration. Over that very sea old Odysseus, the much-enduring man, had been driven pell-mell before the tempest. What he suffered seems magnificent in poetry; and pious Æneas, too, the pale copy of him of Ithaca, did he not encounter a storm somewhere in the neighbourhood? While a man can think of epic tempests he is not much to be pitied. In fact, while the Mediterranean, during the first paroxysms of its fury, was lashing up its waves, and preparing to make its appearance in all its terrible grandeur, L—— and I amused ourselves with recalling our schoolboy reminiscences of Homer and Virgil.

XXVIII.

Thus we went on during the first few hours of the storm; then, however, all its poetical beauty passed away, and the grim, stern, cold reality remained. Sick and dispirited, I crawled on deck, where it was impossible to take a single step without holding by a rope. The sailors were drenched to the skin; the muzzles of the guns on the one side under water; the sails, all but one, reefed close; and of the little canvass that was visible, I could only now and then catch a glimpse through the driving spray.

The ship's side had been turned to the waves, which the captain assured me would have staved in the stern in ten minutes. No sea I have ever seen resembled that. The billows fell far short in magnitude of those vast swells which in the Atlantic rise like mountains, and roll majestically over its boundless surface. Here the surges were short and broken, churned into a confused mass of foam and spray, boiling, hissing, and seething without intermission; while at night the wind howling sounded through the yard-rings like a chorus of devils.

In the cabin there was a dead blank. We scarcely spoke to each other. Every one was wrapped in his own thoughts, preparing, in the best way he could, to face the king of terrors, whom none of us doubted we should have to face in the course of a few hours. One of my companions, who was so sick that he could not crawl out of his berth, besought me to go on deck, and if possible reckon how long, in such a sea, it would take us to die. In my attempt to ascend, I was washed back by a huge wave, which completely drenched me.

A sail was then thrown over the stair-head by the mariners, and lashed tight with a rope, so that there was no exit from the cabin. Had the ship gone down, therefore, we must have been drowned where we were. From the glimpse I had caught, however, of the face of the sea, I felt sure the most

powerful swimmer could not live five minutes. My companion thanked God; and, throwing himself back in his berth, never again during the whole of that day opened his lips, except to express his surprise that I could in such circumstances think of taking off my wet clothes, and putting on dry ones.

"It will be all the same," he said, "in half-an-hour; why, then, do you trouble yourself?"

"I feel uncomfortable," I replied, "and had rather be dry than wet."

Invited by the example of Gaetano, who sat silently smoking in a corner, I mechanically lighted a cigar, and followed his example, my mind possessed meanwhile by the most gloomy apprehensions. The Bey and his slave lay like two bales of cotton in their cabin, never uttering a word, or even so much as venturing to smoke. They also had taken their farewell of this world, and were trying to reconcile themselves to the necessity of leaving it.

XXIX.

One night, I know not which, as I really lost all idea of time, our last moment seemed suddenly to have arrived. The iron and marble with which the vessel was freighted for the Pasha, during one dreadful lurch, seemed all to have rolled to one side of the hold, the partition boards having given

way. At the same moment there was a fearful cry on deck, and a death-like lull, as if the "Black Eagle" had given up the struggle with the winds, and was now sinking calmly through the sea.

We looked at each other, pale and trembling, and expected to see the cabin fill in a moment. Presently, however, we heard the contents of the whole roll back, the "Eagle" righted herself, and once more bore away gallantly before the tempest. Then there rose a shout wild and joyous from the sailors, and I endeavoured to force my way upon deck to join them. But the sail was still bound tightly over the stair-head, and there was no exit. I called, but no one heard or heeded. Returning to the cabin, I beheld, by the light of the dim lamp, Gaetano, the blasphemous Neapolitan, kneeling before a little rude picture of the Virgin. His stupid apathy had been subdued by fear. He prayed now, but had never, perhaps, prayed before since he left his mother's lap. It was a melancholy sight. How long he remained in that posture I did not notice, but when my attention was next called to him, he was quietly smoking as usual.

One of my English friends, who had with him a prayer-book, took it out, and, with something like the "Sortes Virgilianæ," sought to discover what was to become of us, by observing the first verse or sentence on which his eye lighted. Curiously enough, it was this, "And He brought them up safe from many waters." This com-

forted us by directing our thoughts towards the only Source of safety or protection.

XXX.

I kept, as I have said, no note of time; but the next morning after this was Sunday. I went into the Bey's cabin, and sat down on his bedside to talk with him. The motion of the vessel had become a little more steady, and secretly all of us now began to hope we had seen the worst of it. Suddenly, while I was speaking, a ray of sunshine descended through the bull's-eye into the cabin, upon which, patting the Islamite on the shoulder, I exclaimed, "Inshallah; it is all right." Ali raised himself upon his elbow, and, peering out under his heavy eyebrows, beheld the little patch of golden light on the floor. His very beard seemed now to tremble with joy.

Kafoor said he would get us some coffee.

"We have taken nothing exclaimed the Bey for I know not how many days, and we will make a good breakfast now."

He then rose, as did the rest of our companions; and we all went on deck together. Nothing as yet was in sight but sea and sky. The clouds, in wild and fantastic masses, still arched the firmament from east to west, but here and there there were large rents, and through these, floods of sunshine descended on the disturbed waters.

It was one of the most glorious scenes that could possibly be beheld at sea. Here and there the cloud-vault was of a lurid black, deepening as it descended towards the edge of the horizon, and beneath it the sea reflected the full depth of its gloom. Contrasted with this sombre background, were large fields of laughing light vapours, of fleecy whiteness, and encircling expanses of bright blue sky. The sun, when disentangled as it were from the vapour, looked like the "god of this new world," refulgent in golden majesty and infusing life into everything beneath.

XXXI.

The captain's brother now came to me, and, reverting to a wish I had formerly expressed, offered to make for some harbour in the Morea, if I would pay the port dues. Of course I immediately consented; and the ship was put about, and went dashing through the glittering waters towards the glorious country whose interior I so ardently desired to visit. Every sail was unfurled; and, at the rate of eleven knots an hour, we flew gallantly along. Now the "Black Eagle" vindicated her right to the name; her bows ploughing up the waves into one sheet of silver foam, which rose above us in a glittering canopy, and descended midships in a heavy shower.

Ali, who had overheard the mate's proposal,

now came up to me, and not only offered to bear his share of the expenses, but insisted that every other passenger should do the same. All cheerfully agreed, and the sacrifice was thus reduced to a trifle.

In the afternoon, the aspect of the sky again portended high winds, if not a storm. Towards the west the exhalations gathered together, and were heaped up into mountains, above the edge of the horizon, along which extended a narrow belt of light. From these superincumbent clouds descended numerous dark columns, which seemed to be so many streams of rain, travelling rapidly over the ocean before the wind, like the sand-columns observed by Bruce in the Nubian Desert; like these, too, they were slightly penetrated by the rays of the setting sun, which flashed, upon their sides, and produced a magnificent contrast with their dusky metallic centres. Shortly afterwards the rack clustered together in one dark mass, eclipsing entirely the descending god.

XXXII.

Next morning I ran upon deck, and certainly expected, or I should rather say dreaded, from the appearance of the heavens, that we should have had another tempest. To the east the sky was lowering, and black streams of rain seemed to be pouring down upon sea and land. The wind

increased rapidly, and blew off shore. Presently, the sun rose awfully sublime. Seen through the mists which hovered over the sea, it presented the appearance of a vast furnace-mouth, glowing with intense fire; and from this portal streaks of light struggled heavily into the gloom, casting a blood-red hue over a large portion of the firmament. But in a short time it cleared away, and we had then a fine view of the coast of Peloponnesus from the island of Sapienza to Cape Matapan.

If I had on a former day admired the wild, rugged, irregular aspect of the Peloponnesian coast, beheld from a distance, my admiration was greatly increased on drawing near. No two hills seemed to have the same form; some were conical; others resembled a vast wave driven before the storm; others again, like long unbroken sweeps of forest trees, rose and sank in a strange, fantastic manner. As we drew nearer still, we observed there was no beach, neither sandy nor pebbly, but the dark rocks came down close to the water, which leaped up, and broke about them in snow-white foam. As far as the eye could reach, no traces of vegetation appeared, excepting a few scattered patches of young grass, and a small range of stunted trees along the summits of the nearer ranges of mountains, which in this part of the Morea have a character truly Alpine.

XXXIII.

As the day advanced, the weather became beautiful; the sun burst from behind the clouds, and threw a flood of glory upon sea and land. The blue, misty mountains towered majestically in the distance, blending their summits with the vast ridges of vapour, which rested upon them, and seemed to form a part of their substance. Above these, as daylight passed away, the stars came forth, cresting the peaks of cloud and hill as with a coronet. Such were the appearances of nature as we drew near Navarino. On our right, at a short distance, lay Modon, a small town, with the aspect of one extended fortress, running along the shore level with the water. Two great towers, at the extremities of the town, form its regular defences, and another similar building, rising like a minaret towards the centre, marks the site of the place to those who approach it from the sea.

A lofty conical mountain indicates the position of Navarino, which lies at its foot towards the north-west. As we drew near the entrance of the harbour, we observed on the left a spacious cavern in the rocks, into which, when the wind is high, the waves dash with a thundering sound. A little further on, a large black crag projects from the shore, and is constantly surrounded by leaping waves.

For some time the wind had been gradually dying

away; Poseidon and Æolus having, I suppose, agreed that I, one of the devoutest of their worshippers, should enter their ancient dominions in peace. Many an heroic prow in mythical times had ploughed these waters; but never did god or hero enter the port of sandy Pylos under more agreeable auspices. Overhead, the sky was studded with stars and constellations, which gazed Narcissus-like, at their own beauty, reflected from the serene waters. The soft air was not that of Italy; there was no languor in it. It was at once balmy and invigorating. With all our sails spread, we could scarcely woo sufficient wind into them to waft us along the Point of Sphacteria into the bay —and what a bay!—fifteen miles in circumference, and protected completely by the land, from every wind that blows. As we moved up slowly along the island, rendered sacred by Spartan valour, we admired the gigantic natural arch, which, extending through its whole breadth, afforded us a prospect of the sea without.

XXXIV.

The first sound of life that came to me from Greece, was the barking of a shepherd's dog in the mountains, to which one of our sailors replied with admirable powers of imitation. Next I observed a bright fire on the northern shore of the harbour, and then the lights of all the windows of Navarino streamed out a welcome upon us.

Let not the English reader be offended by what I am going to say. I had lived in France until I was half a Frenchman; and therefore, when I heard on shore the roll of the French drum (the whole Morea was then occupied by French troops), and listened to the songs of the soldiers as they paced the beach, my heart leaped with pleasure.

Historical associations are weak, compared with living sympathies. Classical Greece I loved, as one loves one's ancestors; but towards revolutionary France I felt all the yearnings of a brother, and at that moment I knew of no sound that would have been so welcome to my ears as a snatch of the "Marseillaise," which, in defiance of orders, some republican soldier was humming to himself on the solitary beach.

Few, perhaps, give the French due credit for the tremendous struggles they have made for liberty. The excesses they committed during the Reign of Terror, as well as before and after, everybody is sure to remember; but we are not so sure to remember the unparalleled virtues they displayed at the same time. In the annals of liberty there are no more exciting, and few brighter pages than those which record the achievements of revolutionary France; to which no writer, historian, or politician has yet done justice.

The old, forgotten melodies of 1793, seemed to rise from the depths of time, and become audible as I listened to the thrilling words of the "Marseil-

laise," as they floated upwards, like a hymn, through the atmosphere of old Hellas. The Demos of Athens would have rejoiced to thunder forth so patriotic a song, worthy to be classed with the democratic air of "Pallas, stormer of cities."

XXXV.

Perhaps, if I may venture to say so, I belong to the South by my temperament, or it may be that the education we receive impregnates more persons than choose to acknowledge it with an enthusiastic fondness for republican Greece. I looked upon it as the birthplace and cradle of beauty, intellectual and physical. I had drenched myself with its literature, its poetry, its popular eloquence, its matchless histories, its philosophy, and its arts, and I found it impracticable to look calmly and unmoved on the shores of the first Hellenic harbour into which I had entered. It was like stepping back two thousand years into antiquity. No one on board exactly shared my feelings, though L—— remained with me for several hours on deck. The night was perfectly delicious. On board and ashore everything was still, so that not a sound could be heard, save now and then the scream of the sea-fowl, as they soared along the cliffs of Sphacteria.

The sky looked beautiful, but had not the beauty I could have wished. It had clouds in it, the lingering skirts, as it were, of the late storm—white,

indeed, and fleecy, but still clouds, and I should have preferred one immense vault of luminous æther. The moon, surrounded by innumerable stars, appeared at intervals, as these vapoury curtains were gathered up or withdrawn, and then the Peloponnesian hills and mountains appeared to be invested with almost preternatural loveliness. The moon seems to me always to impart an air of unreality to the world. I am short-sighted, to which circumstance, perhaps, I owe half the ideal beauty and grandeur which the earth often assumes in my eyes.

XXXVI.

On the present occasion the Hellenic mountains looked like things piled up by some magic pencil, against a background of turquoise and silver bedropped with gold. They did not seem so much substances as the airy creations of a dream. Here and there the moonlight rested on them in patches, while their half-transparent summits appeared to be entangled in the golden embraces of the Pleiades or some other constellation. L—— left me about midnight, and I remained alone upon the deck.

My thoughts then travelled along the most deeply-worn track in all the intellectual field of associations, to the banks of the Leman Lake, where those I most loved on earth were, no doubt, then slumbering beneath the same moon. Distance is a sort of mystery, and the ways by which we

produce it often appear mysterious also, when we deeply consider them. Within a comparatively few days, I had been at Jolimont, writing, reading, smoking, laughing with my children, or chatting with my wife. I had now crossed the Alps, traversed a large portion of Italy, passed along Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, and was now in the half-fabulous land of Hellas, the first syren look of whose beauty had literally intoxicated me.

XXXVII.

It is in such moods that the most unambitious write poetry; and I, also, who can say with Ovid—

> "Nor Clio nor her sisters have I seen,
> As Hesiod saw them, on the shady green—"

found my ideas taking a poetical turn, and—

> "Lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came."

Whoever has travelled thus far with me will have become tolerant by this time, so that, without further preface or apology, I shall introduce at once my unpolished verses, warm from the heart, and, I wish I could add, faithful to its fires; but now that I see them before me in black and white, they look, as Roubiliac said of his early sculptures, very much like tobacco-pipes. However, as the French conducteurs say, "*Allons, mes enfants; il faut marcher toujours:*"—

> Wherefore do we toil in youth?
> Wisdom, stern, confess the truth;

Wherefore dare the battle's strife,
Deeming light of death and life?
Wherefore haunt the Muses' spring,
Or touch Apollo's golden string,
Or, in some ancient turret gray
Charm the drowsy hours away
By the spell of learned page,
Full of precepts quaint and sage?
Wherefore watch the golden fires
Wherewith night her head attires,
When in silent state she lies
Above the cloudy fretted skies?
Wherefore in the crowded hall,
With hired fury chafe and brawl?
Wherefore in the senate sit,
And brandish eloquence and wit;
Fire the breast with patriot zeal,
To struggle for the common weal?
Wherefore thus in youth and age,
Toil we o'er this weary stage;
But that by the sacred hearth—
The loveliest, holiest spot on earth—
Woman's smile should meet our eyes,
And gild with love our energies?
This, this, is all the golden spoil,
We seek in life's Olympic toil;
And this through wavering good and ill,
The central power attracts us still;
We think, we toil, we war, we rove,
And all we ask is—woman's love!

XXXVIII.

Next morning I was up with the first break o dawn, scrutinizing, by the rapidly growing light, the unfolding features of the scene. The fort, the town—picturesquely scattered on the slope of a hill, and with its white houses relieved against the

yellow, marly soil—the tranquil waters of the bay, the gently swelling eminences, the blue mountains in the distance, with the rich sky above, blushing with the purple light of the morning—all these formed a prospect of singular magnificence.

Soon after breakfast we went on shore in the captain's boat. Of course, the travelled and the wise will smile, but I must acknowledge my weakness—my object being not to appear philosophical, but to confess the truth—at every pull of the oar my heart beat more quickly; all the inspiration of my boyish days was upon me.

I felt the most devouring impatience to be ashore; and when from the boat's bow I leaped on the beach, and felt myself standing on the soil of Greece, I experienced a thrill of delight equal to that of the long-parted lover when he rushes into the arms of his mistress. It matters not what you love, but if you love it earnestly and honestly, the attainment of it must always give you extraordinary delight. I had loved Greece, since the earliest dawn of memory, as the cradle of republican liberty; and the reader will pardon me if I acknowledge that my eyes were moist with pleasure as I first planted my foot firmly on its breezy shore.

When I attempted to walk, I found myself tottering like a child just escaped from leading-strings—the roll of the ship seemed to be still throwing me from side to side. Everything around appeared to rock and pitch as in a high sea. We went to

the custom-house, gave in our names, and were then at liberty to go where we pleased.

XXXIX.

The Greeks who were here assembled possessed very striking features—in most cases handsome, but savage, with immense moustachios, and long hanging elf-locks. One of these sinister-looking gentlemen, who spoke Turkish, accompanied us to the town, conversing with Ali Bey as we went along. It gave me pleasure to see Turk and Greek thus walking side by side, now no longer as tyrant and slave, but on terms of proud equality.

The people of this place, like all other Greeks, are remarkably inquisitive, and came flocking in crowds to stare at us. It was now some time, perhaps, since they had seen a Turkish Bey, and in all probability had never beheld one walking peacefully by their doors, arm in arm with two Englishmen, as Ali now did with L—— and me, rather as a timid spectator than as a haughty despot.

The aspect of Navarino is very remarkable, quite that of a settlement in the wilderness. Buildings hastily run up with timber, little wooden cabins three or four times the size of a watchman's box; no streets, no pavement, no regularity; many, perhaps most, of the dwellings have wooden stairs outside, like the Swiss châlets, or the more ancient

houses in Normandy. Two or three were neat and pretty, plastered and whitewashed externally, and apparently clean within.

XL.

The Greek burying-ground, which is beside the church, has no wall or enclosure of any kind. The graves, in some instances, are marked with rude stones; but the whole space is left open, to be trampled upon by man and beast, and has the appearance of a cemetery in a long-deserted city. The Frank place of interment is enclosed by a wall, and contains many graves. The French on their first arrival were attacked by a sort of pestilential disorder, supposed to have been caused by the great number of dead bodies cast ashore after the battle of Navarino, and left unburied, or only half interred, to fester and putrefy in the sun. When these had been cleared away, or thoroughly decomposed, the place became healthy enough.

The situation itself seems to be particularly salubrious. The soil is rocky, gravelly, and dry, and the houses considerably above the level of the sea. The water used in the fortress is conveyed thither by an ancient aqueduct, constructed by the Venetians. In the public square there is a fountain which is now quite dry.

The inhabitants are said to be supplied with water by other fountains, scattered about the town,

which totally escaped my notice; but if these resemble the one above commemorated, the modern Pylians must occasionally live, like chameleons, on air, unless they choose to make a pilgrimage to the aqueduct provided for them by their old masters from the Lagunes.

XLI.

The only garden in the whole neighbourhood belongs to a Maltese, who, abjuring the appellation he bore formerly in Valetta, now rejoices in the name of Smith, which, he says, is merely a translation of his original name. No matter whether it is so or not; he is a jolly good fellow, and does honour to the fraternity of the knights. Smith keeps a coffee-house, in the best part of the town, where we had the honour to make his acquaintance.

Here, also, our motley company fell in with a group of French officers, among whom there was one of the children of Erin, who having gone to Paris as a medical student, had spent all his allowance in a few weeks, and then entered as a common soldier in the French army. Paddy had now risen, by dint of merit, to be a non-commissioned officer, and expected on that very day to be invested with a pair of epaulettes. He spoke to me a great deal of the vicissitudes through which he had passed, but cheered himself with a hope of being some day, like Murphy, a marshal of France. Whether or not he ever realized his brilliant expec-

tations is more than I can say, but before I left Navarino he enjoyed the extraordinary pleasure—for it evidently was so to him—of showing me the announcement of his promotion to the rank of a commissioned officer.

XLII.

I have said we breakfasted on board; but what was one breakfast to people in circumstances so exciting? The thin fare of the Genoese captain seemed no better than the feast of the Barmecides, and was totally dissipated before we had taken ten steps on *terra firma*. No sooner, therefore, did we enter the coffee-house of Maltese Smith than we ordered another, such as beys and gentlemen ought to eat. First came in the smoking coffee-pot, whose black contents were poured into large white French cups, and filled the air of the whole apartment with its perfume. Then followed the novel luxury of cream, with new-laid eggs, and delicate white fresh butter, from the interior of the Morea, with rolls of the finest quality, and lemonade, and rosolio, and heaven knows what besides.

Our whole party ate like a parcel of famished sailors, who had been tossed about the ocean for a month on a raft, after having devoured their shoes and Russia ducks. For my own part, I thought that Navarino would never furnish me with enough. However, I found time, between the mouthfuls, to laugh and chat with the French officers, who, seated at a table close by, were doing

considerable justice to a breakfast after their own taste, consisting of omelets, coffee, and bacon. For our parts, we finished off with a few cold fowls, when we had despatched which, we felt ourselves in a condition to smoke.

Smith then brought us a mountain of cigars, which were piled upon a basket in the middle of the table; and Ali, Kafoor, L——, and I, of course, with the everlasting Neapolitan, began to puff away, which seemed to alarm the Frenchmen, for, apprehending the conflagration of the Maltese's premises, they one by one made their escape.

The house stood at no great distance from the beach, and through the windows we could see the tiny waves chasing each other towards the shore, while the whole broad face of the harbour glittered tremulously in the sun. Who does not remember the luxury of reposing on land after a voyage? Who has not exclaimed, in the words of the old song, "Where's the danger now?—who feels it?" The breeze came softly in through the doors and windows, gentle but refreshing; and everybody's animal spirits were overflowing. Ali's hilarity knew no bounds; he laughed, chatted, told innumerable anecdotes, and seemed to be already in Paradise. The grave Italian, of whom I have before made mention, felt his enthusiastic features relax at the sight of the old Turk's joyousness; and Gaetano now and then grinned, though he still held the cigar tightly between his teeth.

XLIII.

Notwithstanding my fondness for society, I contrived, as soon as breakfast was over, to slip away from my companions, and stroll out alone towards the hills. Against this enjoyment the French officers had cautioned me, observing that I should inevitably get shot if I proceeded to any great distance beyond the town. But I neglected their warning.

The slopes of the mountains, fanned by a delicious breeze, were still, though far advanced in autumn, covered thickly with wild-flowers, interspersed with patches of evergreen thickets. Here and there were diminutive ravines or gullies, over which the soldiers of Athens and Sparta had once marched. All around, however, was completely silent now; so that, forgetting where I was, I went rambling on, now picking up a pebble, now a daisy, or a little earth which I meant to keep, and have preserved to this hour. One of the wild flowers, too, shrunken and faded like Greece itself, still sticks to the page of my journal, and often serves to remind me of the quiet pleasures of that morning.

Most persons, I believe, are fond of wild-flowers, which often possess a charm greater than that of the richest denizens of the garden. These, in their artificial splendour, seem boldly to challenge your admiration; whereas the others retire modestly

away, and seek to conceal themselves behind some bush, or brake, or rude stone fence, or bank, or rock, from the gaze of man. If you would enjoy their sweetness, you must search for them; and pleasant is that search. You light upon them as upon so many new stars, beautifying and rendering fragrant the face of earth.

I am partial to people who are fond of flowers; and as I knew Ali was, I picked up a few for him. It is no fancy, but those of Greece are sweeter than any I have ever smelled elsewhere. This is particularly the case with the wild thyme, which, when trodden upon, fills the air with a sudden fragrance, beyond description rich and soothing. Everybody knows the passion of the Athenians for flowers, particularly for the violet, with which they crown themselves, regarding it as a symbol of their democracy. There were here no specimens of this republican gem, this sweet and modest citizen of Attica, otherwise I should have selected it in preference to all others—even to the gaudy and imperial rose. The little specimens I did gather, were nameless to me, for I am no botanist. Perhaps I liked them the better on this account, imagining for them poetical appellations in the liquid softness of the old language of Hellas, where flowers of all kinds almost obtained an apotheosis for the important parts they played in all religious festivals and ceremonies.

XLIV.

In the midst of my classical musings, I was suddenly recalled to myself by the report of a musket close at hand, and the whizzing of a ball over my head. I could not imagine it was aimed at me; but if it was, they mistook me for a Frenchman, and I forgive them. However, having no ambition to be shot, I at once took the hint, and retreated towards the town, though as the firing was not repeated, I think the affair must have been entirely accidental.

Why the Peloponnesians should hate the French, who had come hither for their political emancipation, is not difficult to be explained. Lively and agreeable as our neighbours are, they generally contrive to render themselves objects of dislike wherever they go in any numbers, by their reckless interference with the feelings and prejudices of the inhabitants—especially in all that regards women. This I was told by every Greek I conversed with at Navarino, especially by one extremely handsome young man, with whom I got into conversation in a billiard-room, where Greeks only were present. In figure, countenance, and expression, he seemed to be a true representative of his classical ancestors, carrying himself with a noble air, which indicated extraordinary courage and resolution.

I asked him how it happened, that, with the

exception of two or three very aged persons, I saw no women in the place. He replied, it was entirely owing to the detestable French, but added that, if I would smoke a pipe with him in the evening, he would show me what features Greece could still boast. Though it interrupts my narrative, I may as well finish this little digression at once. I accepted his invitation; and when we were comfortably seated on a divan, in a back room, overlooking a little moonlit grove, and had our pipes filled and lighted, my young friend clapped his hands, upon which a lady made her appearance, beautiful as Artemis, and with much of her character of mind and features. It was his sister.

"Aglaia," said he to her, in a most gentle and affectionate tone, "bring us in some coffee. This is an English gentleman, so you need not fear."

XLV.

Aglaia soon vanished, and returned with the coffee, which, in such houses, is always kept in readiness. While she was pouring it out for us, I made several attempts to address her in Romaic, which I spoke so abominably that it quite upset her gravity, and she laughed outright. She was a girl of about seventeen, tall, fair for a Greek, with large liquid black eyes, and a profusion of black hair. Her brother seemed intensely pleased at

the admiration she excited in me. He said in Italian, of which she did not understand a word—

"Confess that beauty has not yet vanished from Greece."

"No," I replied, "nor will it ever disappear from the country, so long as you and your sister remain in it."

At this he laughed, and said—"Aglaia, sit down and sing a song; mother will hear you, and be delighted."

Without further ceremony, the Greek girl seated herself, and sang. Of the words I could not judge, for, through her pronunciation, I could attach no meaning to them. But her voice was rich and melodious, and she seemed to sing with all her soul. I fear I shall scarcely be able to express in what consisted the difference in her manner, and that of the Italian women. If I say she was austere, it will convey a wrong idea. She seemed like an innocent child with a woman's form. A veil of extreme modesty enveloped her. She expected no admiration, and courted none, but talked with the most natural simplicity. I was often reminded of her afterwards by the young Bedouin women I saw in the desert, beneath their father's tents, though no Arab ever possessed features like hers; so delicately proportioned, so soft, so fair, so radiant with intellect. I wished I could have seen her mother, but she appeared to be unwell, and the father was not that evening at home. To what rank they

belonged, I could not inquire; but from the style in which they lived, it was obvious they were wealthy, for though she chose to wait upon her brother, I observed several servants about the house, all females of course.

This was the only opportunity I enjoyed of seeing a Peloponnesian woman; but, combined with the beauty of the young men, it was sufficient to convince me that the Hellenic race has not much degenerated in that part of the country.

I ought perhaps to say one word of her dress; it was a relic of Turkish domination, being purely oriental in fashion and materials. On her head she wore a red velvet cap, flowered with gold, and from beneath this, her numerous tresses, studded with gold coins, descended over her shoulders. Her dress consisted of a tightly fitting vest of pale pink, embroidered with white, open in front, so as to expose a portion of the bosom and the chemise; a crimson shawl around her waist, tightly twisted, in lieu, I suppose, of a corset; and a pair of trousers of white muslin, with gold sprigs. They were gathered in at the ankles, like those of the Memlúks; and a part of the bare white foot was visible above the slipper of green embroidered velvet.

XLVI.

But I must bid adieu to Aglaia and her brother, who have betrayed me into a sad digression, and return to the business of the day. This, of course, was dinner, which I invited L—— and the Bey to share with me at a country house belonging to Maltese Smith, situated in the midst of a garden outside the town. We proceeded to the scene of action early in the afternoon, and found the whole place perfectly charming. Smith was obviously a man of taste.

In a space comfortably enclosed with walls, in the English style, was a perfect wilderness of trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers; such flowers I mean as flourish in autumn, beneath that genial sky. I hate melancholy comparisons, especially when the business in hand is enjoyment. Yet I cannot help comparing the last flowers of the year to old age, which, when invested with poetical feelings, seems like a long-drawn bright line, growing dim as it approaches the horizon, to mingle with the darkness which encircles life.

In most countries autumnal flowers are scentless: but in Greece a perfume always lingers about them, as beauty and majesty do about age, for the human form, when impregnated with intellect and virtue, is beautiful even in decay; and I have often gazed with silent delight on those grand old men one meets in the East, where the white hair and tower-

ing bald forehead seem to aspire towards the skies, whitherward they are hastening.

These remarks, I see, have not much to do with gardening, so I shall stick more closely to the alleys which conducted us around the fragrant wilderness of Maltese Smith. I particularly admired some magnificent rhododendrons, sixteen or eighteen feet high, with beautiful specimens of the oleander and the agnus castus, which reminded me of the gardens of old Attica. The reader of Rousseau will remember with what rapture, after a lapse of fifty years, he saw a specimen of the pervanche he had looked upon in youth in company with Madame de Warrens. It was with somewhat similar feelings that I now beheld a small bed of violets, whose delicate perfume seemed to be redolent of Athenian glory. Beside them were a few red convolvuli, which appeared to produce the same effect upon Ali, whose eyes filled with tears as he gazed at them. As we walked along, I carelessly asked him why the sight of those flowers moved him so. They reminded him, he said, of those which grew on the banks of the little lake close to the kiosk, where he used to sit at evening with his wife. "Wallah!" he exclaimed, "I could see her face distinctly amongst the petals; and can you wonder that I was moved?"

We walked on for several minutes without speaking another word, L—— following us at a distance, conversing in Arabic with Kafoor.

XLVII.

What infinite reminiscences may be crowded into one day! And with what marvellous facility do we glide from one track of thought or feeling to another! The sun was now sinking towards the west, and, like a great and glorious spirit about to take its leave of earth, appeared to invest itself with tenfold magnificence at each departing footstep. The firmament was flooded with colours for which language has no name; clouds there were none, but the ethereal mists which supplied their place were painted with hues of infinite variety. Amethyst, purple, saffron, green, and gold, terminating on the edge of the horizon in a field of blood red. In this heavenly panorama, the changes and transitions were almost as quick as in the play of the Aurora Borealis, which, in the Arctic regions, supplies the place of sun and moon. The great celestial painter, Helios, seemed to be drawing a thousand colours from the light, and flinging them in infinite profusion over sky and earth. It was a sight of unparalleled beauty, which literally intoxicated the soul, and enabled it to taste for the moment the raptures of beatitude which it anticipates after its emancipation from the body.

Such sunsets are beheld nowhere but in the East; no, not even in Italy, which would otherwise be too enchanting. Greece and Egypt alone have

such landscapes, where the true theogamia, or marriage of the gods with earth, is consummated before our eyes. What we behold of the surface of our planet seems to be framed, as it were, with celestial glory, and glows and burns like a bride in the intensity of love.

Ali and I stood still—Turks have sentiment, like other people—he put his hand on my arm, and said, "If paradise be more beautiful than this we shall be too—too happy."

XLVIII.

From this sort of reverie we were aroused by Smith's coming to inform us that dinner was ready. In an instant our ideas flowed into a new channel. In fact, Smith's face was an antidote to the sublime: you could not look at him without laughing; there was such a mixture of drollery and harmless cunning in his cocked-up nose, small eyes, and sharp chin. The rogue looked exactly as if he had been perpetrating a practical joke; and so, as I afterwards discovered, he had been. As our appetites were sharp, we followed him, nothing loth, into the house, which, in its way, was as great a wilderness as the garden, there being no two rooms on the same level, or any such thing, properly speaking, as a floor; but a labyrinth of stairs and little passages, and detached rooms, and closets.

some with beds, others without; leading up, down, here, there, and everywhere.

As we entered, I inquired if we were to be introduced to Mrs. Smith. He grinned, and replied there was no such person.

"Then," inquired I, "do you wear that garment yourself?" pointing to a handsome French silk dress, which hung suspended from a peg in a sort of open wardrobe, and beside it, on another peg, a very fashionable pair of stays.

"The truth is," answered he, "Mrs. Smith is not quite well;" but an extraordinary merry laugh which I twice or three times heard from a neighbouring chamber, convinced me that Mrs. Smith's illness was not likely to prove fatal that time. However, on we went to the dining-room, which was large, and well furnished with divans, as well as chairs. The window (it had but one) was unglazed, and opened upon the harbour, which the last rays of the sun were now covering with crimson and gold.

XLIX.

But adieu, to the picturesque. The soup was on the table. We were all hungry; so down we sat, and fell to at once—Englishmen, Bey, slave, and all, for we were thoroughly democratic.

It is always best never to inquire what you are eating. The soup was excellent, though with what

it was made Mrs. Smith only knew. To me it tasted like nothing sublunary, and the Bey ate it with as great a relish as if it had been composed of stewed Efreets. L—— declared he had once tasted a similar soup in northern India, made with the wings of wild peacocks. At any rate, it soon disappeared; then followed a pilau, in the true Turkish fashion. Over this we lingered for some time, as being loth to abridge the pleasure. Next came a dish of most suspicious aspect, which at once attracted the attention of the Bey. He was not in many respects particular; but still there were things, which, as a devout professor of El Islam, he could not touch, and this appeared to him to be one of them.

"Is it not," said he, turning pale, and speaking in a whisper, "is it not a part of the unclean beast? May Allah singe the beard of the Maltese!"

It had never occurred to me to think what it was. However, now that he mentioned it, I feared it must be pork; and calling in Mr. Smith, I inquired of him, in an angry tone, how he dared to place pork before a Mussulman.

"Pork, Sir!" exclaimed the innocent rascal; "pork, Sir! Lord bless you, it is the best mutton you ever saw. It is a peculiar sheep that is found in the interior of the Morea, and the flesh is so white and tender, that strangers often mistake it for pork; but I assure you, Sir, it is the best Morea mutton, and all the Turks that have been at Navarino,"

(he had never before seen a Turk in his life, at least in his own house)—"all the Turks, I say, eat it, and think it delicious."

At this audacious speech, both L—— and I found some difficulty in restraining our laughter; but, turning round to the Bey, I explained to him that it was mutton, and that he might eat of it boldly. He still seemed to have some qualms of conscience, as he glanced over the strangely-shaped leg of mutton; however, upon our assurance, he was determined to silence his scruples, so he desperately attacked the pork, and protested it was the nicest mutton he had ever tasted. I was glad of this, as a hitch might have spoilt our dinner. Smith looked excessively penitent, and next brought in some magnificent fowls, the roasting of which Mrs. Smith had evidently superintended, for they were done quite *à l'Anglais*, though the sauce that accompanied them was perfectly Levantine. To complete the list of our delicacies, we had excellent potatoes, boiled to a nicety, which I regarded as an irrefragable proof of the presence of an Englishwoman in the kitchen.

Our dessert was altogether answerable to the dinner. Water-melons from Kalamata, melons from Malta, apples from Ancona, almonds, walnuts, and grapes from the interior of the Morea. Our wine was from Crete, and we paid our respects to it liberally.

When the whole was over, my companions re-

paired on board; while I went, as I have said, to take pipes and coffee with my young Greek friend, from whose company I was summoned to set sail in the evening.

One word more about the people before I quit them. The Greeks of this part of the Morea live hard, or rather are half starved, which, the French say, is their own fault, because, according to them, they will not work. As, at other parts of the world, the Greeks are proverbially industrious, I must attribute their poverty to some other cause. At all events, they are here the finest race of men I have ever seen; handsome, regular, and highly intellectual countenances, peculiarly fine black eyes, and an olive complexion of singular clearness and beauty. The boys and youths are remarkably handsome, even in comparison with the rest of the population.

L.

I may remark by the way, that we took care to lay in a large stock of provisions and groceries at Navarino, in the apprehension of otherwise being starved by the Genoese captain.

On our return on board, the wind being fair, we immediately put out to sea, and sailed leisurely down, close along shore, towards Cape Matapan. As might have been foreseen from the sunset, this was one of the loveliest nights I ever spent on the Mediterranean. Orion and the Pleiades, the

moon and the evening star, seemed to rival each other in brightness, and the air was soft and balmy as that of spring.

All retired early to rest, save the Italian student, who remained with me on deck, to enjoy a moonlight view of the Peloponnesian coast, which, in its barren ruggedness, is one of the grandest and boldest in the world. Here and there, the shadows of the mountains suggested to us the idea of large forests; but as we changed our position, and brought the light, as it were, to bear upon them, we found they were only vast spaces of arid ground or rocks. Shortly after midnight, we retired to rest, and on rising next morning found the calm still continuing, so that, as we sailed along, we had every opportunity of enjoying the varied aspect of the coast.

Only one incident happened that day to diversify the monotony of our existence. Ali called me into his cabin, and told me he had discovered a new pleasure, which was this: having purchased a number of gold watches at Leghorn, he set them all going, and putting them under his pillow, lay down to listen to their multitudinous ticking. This struck me as an original idea, which could have suggested itself to no one but a Turk. I confess, with some degree of reluctance, that I was beginning to grow tired of every one on board, though of no one more than of myself. I was, therefore, generally glad when darkness came, that I might

bury the recollection of all sublunary things in sleep.

LI.

On the second night after leaving Navarino, I had a delightful dream. I was at home at Jolimont; and all my children were running, leaping, and shouting around their mother, who sat on the green, with a baby on her lap. I stood apart like a shadow, and saw without being seen. The boys had anticipated my progress, and were imitating the way in which, according to their notion, I might at that very moment be traversing the desert on a camel. The biggest, on all fours, imitated that lumbering quadruped, and took one of the little ones on his back, who was dignified by the name of papa. At this, all the boys shouted and laughed, while their mamma pretended to kiss the baby, and hid her face. I now felt an impulse to join the group, and was on the point of advancing, when Ali shook me by the arm, and said that if I would come on deck, he would show me one of the most beautiful sights in the world.

I wished him far enough, and his sight too, whatever it might be, for I would have prolonged my dream indefinitely, even, if possible, till my arrival in Egypt. However, I followed him, and on reaching the deck, was smitten with unbounded admiration, which the reader, perhaps, will scarcely think justified by what I am going to say. We had made great way during the night, and the sun

was now rising behind the island of Crete, a large portion of whose western extremity lay before us enveloped in shadow. The summits of the white mountains were bordered from end to end with a fringe of light, anything like which I have never seen in my life but once, and that was afterwards at Thebes, when the sun, at its rise, gave the Arabian mountains, behind Carnac, a similar luminous appearance. In the case of the Cretan Alps, there was infinitely more of real grandeur, for their apices were lofty, and appeared to cleave the blue firmament. Every instant the colour of the bright sky was changed from white to saffron, from saffron to gold, from gold to purple and amethyst, which played and glittered along the rocks like a magical delusion. The precipices came sheer down many thousand feet towards the sea, where they terminated in dense forests, extending to the water's edge. Here and there we could discern breaks and gaps, showing the cerulean sky beyond, while no sign of town, or city, or human habitation of any kind, occurred to dissipate the idea that we were now looking upon the fabulous cradle of Zeus, inhabited only by gods, or the recollection of gods. Presently the sun shot, as it were, with a bound, above the mountains; and all in an instant was broad day, which dissipated every illusion, and reduced Crete to the condition of a common island, made of stone and earth, in the Mediterranean.

LII.

Our dream being over, we descended to breakfast, which was usually prolonged as much as possible, in order to kill time. Nothing could dissipate the idea, in my mind, that I was confined in a floating prison, and going slowly to execution. *Ennui* had changed the "Black Eagle" into a vulture. Read I could not, think I could not—talking, smoking, and eating, were my only resources. Unfortunately, the dulness was not confined to me. L—— grew taciturn, my Pisan friend could do nothing but sing Alice Gray, Gaetano confined himself to cursing and smoking, Kafoor was a walking gentleman; and no one seemed disposed to undergo the labour of conversation but the Bey, the Italian student, and myself.

During the early part of the voyage, sea-sickness and other causes had made a mere nonentity of our Italian friend, who saw nothing, but lay perpetually in his berth like a log. He was reserving himself, apparently, to cheer and comfort me when all the rest should be thoroughly worn out. At the western end of Crete he began this agreeable task, from which he never desisted until our arrival in Egypt. His stomach now having thoroughly recovered its tone, he was able to join us in smoking, which he and Ali conducted in silence, while I wrote my journal after breakfast.

LIII.

I was thus engaged when the captain's brother, my usual informant in all such cases, came to tell me that there was a ship with a "cattiva navigazione," or suspicious manner of sailing, observed in the offing. In other words, we were chased by a Greek pirate, of which, at that time, there were scores in the Archipelago; though it was not often they ventured so far west, out of respect for the British men-of-war going to or returning from the Ionian Islands. However, here we were now, in something like juxtaposition with this ugly customer, which appeared to sail by magic, while we, becalmed by the island, could not advance a foot. The secret, however, was soon explained. The wind blowing down the broad channel which separates Crete from the mainland of Greece, impelled the "cattiva navigazione" towards us, but only up to a certain point, for presently master pirate stood still also, and found all his press of sail of no service. Our captain paced the deck, joining Gaetano in uttering Italian curses upon the pirate and the wind.

"Could I but get the slightest puff," said he, "I would forgive the rascal if he overtook the 'Aquila Nera.' We'd soon show him a smooth stern; but here is not a breath stirring."

He invoked Bacchus and the devil to help him out of his difficulties; but neither seemed much

inclined to descend or ascend to his assistance. Presently there was a bustle on board the pirate, which appeared to be putting out its long sweeps, in which case our fate was obvious. The Bey now descended to his cabin, and soon after returned, armed with pistols and daggers like a porcupine. Kafoor contented himself with a single pair, and a huge broadsword. For myself I had nothing but two pocket-pistols. The brig mounted four guns, which were loaded; while a pyramid of cannon-balls was piled up at the breech of every one of them, at sufficient distance, to allow for the recoil of the gun.

While we were in this state of warlike preparation, a breeze insensibly sprang up, though so slight that it scarcely enabled us to put ourselves in motion, the pirate following, and keeping, as nearly as we could guess, constantly at the same distance. Towards evening, however, the wind freshened, and his bulk soon diminished, for the "Eagle" now once more flew through the waves in a manner truly inspiring. Night fell before we lost sight of our pursuer, who next morning was nowhere to be seen.

We now rounded the western promontory of Crete, and sailed along its southern shore. In the course of the morning, Mount Olympus came in sight, reminding me of Mont Blanc, with its vast expanse of snow, shelving down towards the forest in virgin brightness. That was the birth-place of

Zeus, and all around it were the cradles of some of the wildest fables of the mythology.

Somewhere in the neighbourhood was the Labyrinth, and the shadows of Theseus and Ariadne fluttered through the valleys. By degrees a north wind came, and gradually drifted us out to sea, after which we saw land no more till we beheld the low, sandy coast of Africa, in the vicinity of the Arab's tower. From this point we worked our way on to the harbour of Alexandria, against a contrary wind, and through a heavy sea; but at length Pompey's Pillar and the Pasha's palace rose before us, and I was at last on the shores of Egypt.

PART THE FOURTH.

"Did I *not* love thee?—Oh, for but one throb,
One pulse of all the pulses beating then!
One feeling, though the feeling were a pang!
One passion, though the passion spoke in tears."

T. K. Hervey.

"Fawns on level downs, and flocks
Grazing the tender herb, were interposed
On palmy hillock."

Paradise Lost.

"Over head up-grew
Insuperable height of loftiest shade;
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
A sylvan scene."

Paradise Lost.

PART THE FOURTH.

I.

When I arrived on the shores of Egypt, autumn was, as Chatterton expresses it, "with his gold hand gilding the fallen leaf." We must now suppose that season and winter past, in communings with Isis—nay, a great part even of the spring, and fiery summer to be close impending. I had beheld the Nilotic valley, sprinkled with profuse wild-flowers—had heard the voice of the turtle-dove, and seen the palm-trees put forth their blossoms. All I had ever hoped to do in Egypt I had done, and now with extravagant health, and inexhaustible animals spirits, I placed myself once more on the Mediterranean, filled with the intense desire of home.

Nature, to use no more sacred name, has been most indulgent to me from childhood upwards. Sorrows I have known, like other men, and when like storms they have been passing over me, I have felt all their bitterness.

But what I experienced in Egypt is an image of my whole life, in which the good that has befallen me, has totally swallowed up and obliterated the evil. I am, however, well aware, how much more interesting and romantic it would be to dwell upon plague, pestilence, and famine, to represent myself as perpetually in the jaws of danger, and tracked and pursued by death.

Occasionally, I believe, I had some narrow escapes, but if I was habitually in peril, I was most happily unconscious of it. Indeed, with health, such as I experienced during nearly the whole of my stay in Egypt, it was impossible not to enjoy a happiness something like that of the gods. My cup was running over, and as Joseph, when overcome by love of his brother Benjamin, entered into his chamber and wept there—so again and again, in the desert and ploughed field, have I stepped aside to laugh, just to prevent my companions from suspecting me to be mad. The impulse was irresistible. There was no particular reason for it that I could discover, but it came thrilling up through my frame, from unknown depths, inspiring ineffable delight in its passage.

My whole existence in Egypt, was almost one continued smile, and if any one had been at the pains to look at me in my sleep, I am sure he would have discovered unequivocal tokens of enjoyment in my whole countenance. Awake I was certainly filled with a joyousness beyond expression,

which instead of being dashed, was augmented by the thought of home, since I felt fully persuaded the bright circle extended to Lausanne, and embraced all those I loved in its glorious sunshine.

II.

If it be true that in the South the climate serves people instead of a great-coat, it is equally true that it serves them as a cuirass against ordinary misfortunes. It renders your mind soft and flexible, and enables it to accommodate itself to all circumstances. The few acquaintances and friendships I had made in Egypt, were to be abandoned. My companions out had been scattered to the four winds. The Bey, for whom I had formed a sort of attachment, had gone, in the Homeric language, to eat his own heart in the Delta, overshadowed by Mahomed Ali's neglect. L—— was by this time in India; and the others, heaven knows where. The faces with which I now embarked were new, though in some instances extremely agreeable, and I had to go through that process of perpetual recurrence during life, of making acquaintances out of strangers.

If Byron's notion be correct, that we experience some regret on leaving the most unpleasant persons and places, and that in the act of going away we still keep looking at the steeple—how much more true is it when the people and country we leave

have been both agreeable? Besides, I hated the sea, and, had time permitted, would have made a circuit of five thousand miles to escape a month's tossing about on it.

When I stood, therefore, on the deck of the "Falcon," and looked upon Pompey's Pillar, and the Pacha's palace, and the minarets of the Alexandrian mosques, most probably for the last time, a feeling of sadness came over me.

Had those I loved been with me, I could have lived in Egypt for ever. For me it was full of charms. Everything I heard, everything I saw, only tended to endear it to me the more. I say, endear it, because scriptural associations, which begin with the beginning of life to interweave themselves with our system of thought, and afterwards classical associations, scarcely less potent, and associations of Mahommedan romance, of the traditions of El Islam, and the poetry of the desert, had united to enshrine it in my imagination.

III.

But let these thoughts pass. I was prevented from indulging in a reverie by a pretty little girl, seven years old, who coming up and putting her hand in mine, dragged me off, without ceremony, to take a pipe with her father. There was a thrill of home in the touch of that little hand, which in an instant carried me away to the banks of the

Leman Lake. She was the only child of her parents, yet how did I envy my friend the companionship of that one whom he had brought up for himself, like the lamb in the parable!

We sat down on the deck, turned our backs upon Egypt, and began to talk of Europe. Throughout life it is man's custom to look a-head, and though we had not yet been half-an-hour at sea, it would have delighted us to behold the rocks of Malta, already arising out of the blue waves. But in the language of my old Neapolitan friend, "Ci vuol pazienza, signore."

My companion on the present occasion was a merchant, who had made a large fortune in Egypt, and was taking his only daughter to England for education. He was a man of contented mind and agreeable manners, who had not looked upon Egypt merely as a place for growing beans and cotton, but had studied its antiquities, admired its picturesque beauties, and loved it sufficiently to make it his home for life. He was very far, therefore, from being an ordinary companion; and if the society of any contemplative and placid man could ever reconcile me to the tediousness of nautical existence, his would have done it.

IV.

Every one must have felt, when sitting down with an old friend or acquaintance, how very pleasant it sometimes is to be silent together. You

don't want talk. The very countenance, and aspect, and mien of your companion are prolific of reflection. What a world of reminiscences, hopes, joys, and sorrows, is there in faces that have grown old together. They mirror all the past to each other, the smiles of a whole life seem concentrated in one smile, and eternity seems to brood over their eyelids, and impart to them the serenity of never-dying existence.

Love, as it puts off the shows of material development, goes deeper into the heart, and nestles and conceals itself more closely there. Nothing is more absurd than to suppose that love perishes. It never dies! It came from God, and to God it returns, which is what the ancients meant by making it winged and infantine, for they too felt the beauty of the sentiment implied in the words:—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

It is in simplicity and sincerity, in truth and confidence, that love is always a child. It means no harm, and believes in none, and though it may exist for more generations than we can count, it will always continue cherub-like, brooding over the great deep of humanity, and making it pregnant with all that is beautiful and divine. Wife, children, parents, brethren, whatever is implied in the word home, we pre-signify when we pronounce the word, love. The depths of its mysteries no man can fathom. It is wayward, it trembles

like the magnetic needle during a tempest, pointing now in this direction now in that; but give it a moment's repose, and in the thickest darkness of this mortal existence, it finds its true polar star, and turns steadily towards it.

My friend the merchant and I, as we leaned against the companion on the cabin deck, indulged, no doubt, in very much the same train of thought. His little daughter, Selina, had taken her place upon my lap, and nestled her head in my bosom, and seemed from her quietness to have fallen asleep, while clouds of perfumed smoke enveloped her. We were all drowsy—perhaps the reader is so too. Lest he should put on his nightcap, therefore, and wish me good night, I must break the charm of these mesmeric influences, by introducing him to the captain of the "Falcon," which may as well be done at the dinner-table.

V.

It would not be politic to describe all at once the intellectual cargo of the "Falcon." Let its several passengers come out as they are wanted. For the present, I confine myself to Selina, Selina's father, and a Jew, who, I must observe at the outset, had no objection to pork, and, indeed, thought no more of the laws of Moses in general, than one of the pre-Adamite sultans; whether or not he had read Benedict's "Spinosa," is more than I can say, but he had

certainly adopted his theory, and believed in no other god than the universe; that is, he was a pantheist after the fashion of the old Egyptian hierarchy, whose tenets are more or less developed in "Isis."

Let it not be supposed for a moment that he was a philosopher. Quite the reverse. He was a fat, moon-faced epicure, who delighted in good dinners and cigars, and whose highest flight of fancy never soared above one of the Ghawazi. Still, in some sense, he was amusing, though chiefly as an illustration of how completely the soul may be absorbed by the body, until there is left in the whole human composition scarcely a single spark of spirituality.

He was, nevertheless, a great adept in the multiplication of gold, with which he had stuffed many a cedar coffer. This gave him a certain air of consequence as he strutted the deck, with his weather-eye half shut, a cigar in his mouth, and his hands crossed behind his back.

VI.

The captain was an oddity of another description. He was a Scotchman, of about seventy years of age, but still strong and hale, and as mindful of the main chance as if he expected to reach the age of Methuselah. There must be a wonderful charm in money, which cannot by any process be revealed to the uninitiated, otherwise men would never wor-

ship it with so much ardour. What would I not give to comprehend their philosophy!—to feel the hidden power which passes with certain metallic particles into a man's pocket, and thence by supernatural agency into his mind, making him a totally different being.

Speaking of things altogether sublunary, it operates in him a complete regeneration; when he has undergone the change, he is no longer as other men are, careless, merry, laughing, contented, or even as this publican; his soul is like a guinea, and dwells apart. In time I may perhaps be initiated in these greater mysteries, but at present, money and I are barely on speaking terms. According to the rule of ancient hospitality, I welcome the coming—speed the parting guest.

"Not after this fashion," thought our captain: he had studied political economy under Adam Smith—or, if chronology object, under one of his disciples—and was a great adept in making the most of things, since he gave us a good dinner the first day; and like wise men, we determined to enjoy it, whatever might be our fate during the days succeeding. When he had got as far as the coffee, however, a scintillation of our captain's philosophy flashed out, for, observing the Jew's determination to make syrup of his Mocha, he reminded him gently it was London sugar, and not the sort of rubbish bought for fourpence a pound in the Pasha's dominions. This rather nettled our

Israelite, who from that moment conceived an unappeasable dislike for the economist, which helped not a little to amuse us during the voyage, since the powers of the Italian language were racked to supply fresh terms of abuse for him.

VII.

It is a great pity that descriptions of pleasure should tire—I mean the reader—for as to the writer himself, of course he is never weary of recalling his agreeable reminiscences. What rendered them agreeable, he knows perhaps no more than Adam. For example, there is a little sandy island in the Nile, high up in Nubia, with not a single bush or blade of grass upon it.

Why, therefore, should it have retained a sweeter, a more golden place in my memory, than the most magnificent and gorgeous landscape in the dominions of Isis? All I know is, that we landed, dined, and smoked on that island; reclined at full length on the warm, yellow sand, while the sun, in preternatural splendour, went down behind the Sahara, whose undulations blushed like the ocean's waves at sunset, with purple light. In all my visions of the *dolce far niente*, that little isle is sure to rise up in golden brightness before my fancy, laved on both sides by the gentle Nile, and peopled with dear shadows now gone for ever to their eternal rest.

VIII.

The first night I spent on the Mediterranean, in returning home, constitutes another golden link in the chain of memory. Will the reader forgive me if I dwell once more on the ineffable beauty of sky and sea? All indeed was not external. The circumstances of the hour had converted my mind into a mirror, which reflected the indescribable calm and serenity of the elements. Overhead the stars and constellations glowed and twinkled, and appeared to invite the eye to follow them through the unfathomable abysses through which they eternally roll. The calm sea reproduced them around me on its surface, and a voice, like the voice of love, seemed to pass between the two creations, and to melt them into one.

I was beginning to meditate on the joy a disembodied spirit must feel in traversing the creation of God, penetrated by gratitude as by a flame, and soaring hither and thither at will through the infinity of space, when I was startled by a low, pleasant voice at my side. I looked quickly round, and saw a slight old man, about the middle height, who had not joined us at the dinner-table, but, as he afterwards informed me, ate his meals apart in his cabin.

"What a glorious night!" he exclaimed. "Might not one blamelessly wish to be immortal, to enjoy beauty like this?"

Instead of replying to his observation, I expressed my surprise that I should not have known of his being on board. I did not inquire from what part of the world he had come. There was something in the very tone of his voice, as well as in his countenance, even beheld by the light of the moon, that told me he was from India.

The air, soft and balmy, had barely sufficient motion in it to suggest the idea that it was living. We had our carpets and pipes brought out, with piles of cushions to lean against; and there, in indolent conversation, inhaling the fragrance of Gebel Latakia, and sipping coffee, such as Arabs only can make, we spent the greater part of the night.

He was a man of large experience, a sort of modern Odysseus, who had seen many towns and changes of manners, and reflected profoundly on all he had beheld. Whatever passions might have inhabited his frame formerly, they were now hushed, like the tranquil sea around us, never more to be permanently disturbed by anything sublunary. He was the very reverse of sad. His mind seemed to long for absorption in the great ocean of being—not that he was weary of this life, but that he was somewhat impatient for another, such as wise men figure to themselves in the dreaming East, where the fiery imagination shapes heaven and earth into its own likeness.

By degrees, the torrent of ideas which flowed

between us narrowed and brightened. We became familiar. He talked of his young days, when, like a brilliant meteor, his fancy flashed over the plains of India, in search of images to kindle and animate with life. I felt he was in the throes of confession; that in the course of a few minutes he would be engaged in disclosing to me the mystery of his life. He evidently, however, experienced some reluctance to commence, but after debating the matter fairly within himself, resolved to tell me his story, which he did in the following words:—

IX.

"I arrived in India at the age of sixteen, and was immediately sent up the country, to serve in a civil capacity in the Rajpút States. Far from sharing the prejudices of my countrymen against the natives, I cultivated their society, and sought by every means in my power to be admitted into their friendship. This was probably more difficult in Rajasth'an than anywhere else; but by dint of unwearied perseverance, I at length succeeded in getting myself received as an intimate friend in the houses of several of the principal chiefs, who really loved me like a son or a brother.

"One day, as I was sitting in the embrasure of a window in the palace of my friend, a petty prince of Ajmér, looking out in dreamy listless-

ness on a lake, which lay encompassed with woods at our feet, my friend, after a long silence, said to me:—

"'I have a strange proposition to make; but you will forgive me if I have misunderstood you.'

"This was said inquiringly; and I replied, that he surely knew he might without scruple make any proposition to me, since he could neither do nor say anything inconsistent with the highest honour and integrity.

"The chief bowed. He then remained silent a little longer, and, rising, and taking my hand, 'I am going to propose,' said he, 'a very startling thing. It is that you should abandon your country and your kindred, become a Rajpút, as far as that is possible, and share my fortunes in this obscure part of India.'

"As I saw he was serious, I restrained my inclination to smile, and merely observed that religion would be an obstacle.

"'That proves,' said he, 'that we have hitherto neglected to initiate you in the philosophy of our faith. We believe all religions to be true, and that he who worships God, and does good to mankind, holds the best creed. I know this to be yours, and therefore continue to urge my point. Nothing further than this shall ever be said of your religion; it shall be a sacred thing only to be considered by yourself. All I wish is, that you may become, in form as you are in

reality, my brother, receive my sister's hand, and take upon you the government of this country, when I shall cease, as I shortly must, to be its chief.'

"'What strange ideas are these!' I exclaimed. 'You are in the very dawn of life.'

"'True,' he replied, 'yet must I shortly die. Not, I assure you, with regret, since I shall die for my country. But the seer of my house hath said it, and it must come to pass.'

X.

"Construing my silence into consent, he arose and left the room, and returned shortly afterwards, bringing in his sister, whose beauty exceeded everything I had hitherto conceived of human loveliness. The Rajpút women are celebrated throughout the East for the splendour of their forms, and the regularity and nobleness of their features. My friend's sister was the most beautiful of her race; mild, soft, gentle, yet not without that pride of birth in which, above all people, the Rajpúts delight. Holding out his sister's hand to me; 'You cannot,' said he, 'offer so gross an insult to our house as to refuse this gift, which must be the bond of brotherhood between us. And you, Vaisunta, will consent to become the wife of the man whom, from the deepest affection and sense of duty, I have chosen for you?'

"She bowed and smiled. For myself, I had lost all power of thinking or reasoning correctly. Her beauty had literally cast a spell over me, and all I could do was to signify to her brother that my fate was entirely in his hands, and that I would consent to any proposal he might make to me. He then replied, smiling faintly:—

"'Then she is yours. Let the necessary ceremonies be immediately performed, for fate presses, and in a few days I shall be with the gods.'

XI.

"On this part of my narrative I need not dilate. We were married, and in a few days afterwards the gallant young chief fell in a fray with a neighbouring tribe. Having sent in my resignation to the British authorities, I was free to pursue whatever course I might think proper, and, with the name of chief, took upon me the government of the province. What, in such a situation, might have been the feelings of other men, I will not presume to decide; I can only describe the movements of my own mind, and I can affirm, with truth and sincerity, that not a single idea of ambition entered into my thoughts.

"I administered the affairs of the principality with the assiduity and conscientiousness of a good steward, but hoped and wished for no other reward than the love of Vaisunta, who, without a

figure of speech, had become the whole world to me. It is seldom that heaven creates human beings like her.

"The language usually employed in speaking of women would be quite out of place if applied to her. She was not impassioned, or sentimental, or affectionate, or fond, but a fountain of living love, which no words could describe. No thought of self ever rose in her mind. I was all in all to her, as she was to me. Nay, there was another being who shared her affection: Vaisunta had a mother, the very prototype of herself, further removed from me by time, but otherwise altogether as affectionate and beneficent.

"She had been reconciled to the death of her husband by the certainty she felt of soon joining him, and passing an eternity in his company. Imagination could promise her nothing beyond that, even in heaven.

"I omit all reference to public affairs, which went on with the most perfect satisfaction to the people and to me. All I desire to describe is my own entire felicity. But this I find is impossible. Happiness does not consist in things susceptible of description. It is a sort of atmosphere which we breathe, we know not how—surrounds us, penetrates us, fills both soul and senses, and produces a species of absorption strongly resembling oblivion. If we do not forget external things, we cease to regard them. Vaisunta concentrated all my

thoughts in one. Her image, as it rose from the horizon of intellect, seemed, like the rising sun, to obliterate everything else from that celestial sphere, and to reign there in unclouded glory.

XII.

"During the continuance of this feeling I could neither reflect, nor plan, nor recal the past, nor anticipate the future. Every moment as it passed was sufficient to itself. Plunged into a state of godlike bliss, I could scarcely be said to have any use for thought. All the necessities, all the projects—nay, even all the duties of life, were utterly forgotten. Food, raiment, power, place, influence, friends, enemies, strangers, commanded no more consideration than the dream of yesterday. This convinces me that happiness is incompatible with the state of man.

"To compassionate others, we must know what it is to experience sorrow and suffering. We must be wounded and bruised, that we may feel for those who are so likewise. For a while I seemed to be carried out of the material world, whose shows and images, as they flashed before my mind, awakened sensations—not ideas. Vaisunta had descended, as it were, upon my soul, and transformed it into her own likeness, which assuredly resembled nothing earthly.

"We had a sort of park, jealously enclosed on

all sides, and protected from intrusion. Here were walks, and arbours, and copses, and bowers, and baths, and tanks covered with aquatic flowers. Among these, in the sultry summer, we wandered at daybreak, and beheld the fiery sun thrust its red disk above the horizon, threatening by its brightness to produce the conflagration of the world. On such occasions we would sometimes sit in a bower of odoriferous shrubs, and inhale with rapture their perfume, floating on the breath of the morning.

"Around us, on all sides, were the most brilliant flowers, surcharged with dew, and drooping delicately over the pearly grass, or bowing to their own images in the ponds or streams. From the airy branches of the trees the nightingale sent down showers of music upon us, which were yet not half so sweet as the music of Vaisunta's voice, which thrilled through me like a combination of tones from heaven. Sometimes she would recline on soft couches, placed there purposely for her, and allow her black hair to fall in disorder to the earth. I would then lean over her, and look into her eyes, dark as night, yet full of brilliance, and indicative of whatever is holy, or pure, or absorbing in love. Her lofty, white forehead, formed to be the abode of thought, appeared to become transparent as I gazed, and to disclose to me all the curious mechanism of love and virtue within; but her mouth, where shall I find language to describe it? Humanity, even what is visible of it, is not all of clay.

Mingled with the thing we love, there is some mysterious substance which makes it glow, and brighten, and assume colours explicable by the operation of no material laws. When Vaisunta's lips moulded the external air into words, what I heard was not the mere vibrations of the atmosphere: a soul was enveloped in it which spoke to mine.

XIII.

"In the East, much clothing is unnecessary. Vaisunta affected little. Her perfect purity clothed her sufficiently. No statue chiselled by the hand of Phidias was ever so chaste—no seraph fresh from the presence of God more loving than she. Think, then, of the happiness I experienced when I sat beside her, or at her feet, listening to language such as Eve might have used in Paradise, before one taint of sin had blighted the beauty of earth.

"You will already have anticipated that joy like this could not endure. Vaisunta had given birth to a boy, in whose lineaments the strength of Europe seemed mingled with the softness of Asia. The love of this child seemed to awaken new senses in her. She suckled it herself; and, when it lay upon her breast inhaling the rich current of life, and looking up with smiling eyes into her face, a joy still more unutterable than she had ever before experienced seemed to beam from her features. How many worlds are there in this

world of ours! Every mother is a separate universe, a source of being, a fountain of thoughts and passions, which must go on flowing to all eternity, and producing, as it flows, happiness or misery. As Vaisunta performed this sweet office of suckling her baby, not a shade of doubt or fear passed over her mind—all was sunny and unclouded there; and I felt something like the glory of an archangel encircling me, as I reflected silently that that mother and that child were mine.

"And what happiness is this, if men would but feel it! Where, in all the regions of speculation, can we find anything to compare with it? You have seen Isis, with the infant Horus on her lap. It is the deification of motherhood, of that holiest and most beautiful of relations which confounds humanity with divinity, by delegating, as it were, creative power to mortals. The origin and the birth of stars are nothing to the generation and birth of the soul, which passes from mortal to mortal, kindling, multiplying, and brightening the face of earth and heaven, with thought, religion, and love.

XIV.

"But here below everything has an end, save the mercy of God. One morning, in the midst of summer, Vaisunta, leaving her infant in the cradle, and me watching over it, went forth alone. No presence, however, could atone to me for her

absence. I delegated to a female attendant the duty of sitting by the cradle, and followed Vaisunta into the park. Looking around, however, I could nowhere behold her. She must have tripped lightly and swiftly along, and concealed herself in some perfumed copse, or entered one of the many marble baths, so delicious and inviting in those warm latitudes. I felt no solicitude, but went on, musing, in dreamy happiness.

"As, however, I entered one retreat after another, and found her not, a pang of anguish shot through my soul. I began to be superstitious, and fancied that what I had all this time loved might not have been a woman, but a spirit, which, now that it had given me something to supply its place, had vanished. As this strange idea was taking possession of my mind, I beheld the object of my love, sitting on the side of a bath from which she had just issued.

"Her form was still wet, and her long black hair fell, dripping, over her shoulders. As soon as she saw me she uttered a sharp cry, which I would fain have believed to be one of joy. 'Come to me —come quickly,' she exclaimed, 'I feel sick unto death—the world is fading from about me—I can with difficulty perceive your form as you draw near.'

"At these words, she rose to her full height, and, throwing herself into my arms, said—'Support me, I am dying!' I laid her gently on the grass,

and, shouting for assistance, took water from the bath and sprinkled it on her face; and then, kneeling beside her, lifted up her head and supported it on my breast, in the hope that the faintness would soon pass. It did. She recovered the power of language, but only to assure me that her end was come.

"She threw her arms round my neck, she kissed me passionately, she desired me to receive her soul as it ebbed forth through her lips. When the power of speech had left, her eyes still spoke, and looked ardently into mine till death closed them. She then fell back, and Vaisunta's soul had passed away. I sank with her on the ground, and, some hours later, was found and roused to consciousness by her mother and several female attendants.

XV.

"I shall not attempt to describe my grief; it was proportioned to the happiness I had felt. Nothing more need be said. For me the sex perished with Vaisunta. As no love could equal hers, no other image filled the space hers had occupied, and it required no effort in me to ward off the approaches of another affection. I divided what remained to me of love between my mother and my child; for Vaisunta's mother was mine.

"The boy grew up, and I watched over him, and spoke to him of his mother, and conjured him to lead a life worthy of her. I dilated on the

nothingness of life without that religion which is born of pure love. I inspired him with solicitude for the happiness of the people. I taught him the art of government, which is that of practising self-denial, and devoting yourself for the good of others. The good seed was not sown on a stony soil. He is now the ruler of Ajmér, is married, and has many sons and daughters, and the whole tribe are his family, and happiness and contentment shed their light over the whole land.

"For myself, I am returning to Europe, bearing along with me all that was perishable of Vaisunta. Like the spirit in the Arabian fables, my soul is imprisoned in that vase, with her ashes. It is my duty to live out my time, to do all the good I can, to be a friend, where friendship is possible, when all the incense and perfume of my soul have been burnt out; and what you now see standing before you in the moonlight is nothing, so to speak, but the material shadow of the man who was formerly loved by Vaisunta."

XVI.

Every day, till the day of judgment, may the united blessings of all men and women alight on him who invented the art of writing! Without it all our yearnings for communion with other beings would continue mysteries for ever. By its assistance we are enabled to hold converse with the patriarchs who lived, and made love, and died under tents on the sands of Arabia, or with that

happy old wanderer who has told us what took place under the walls of Troy, in Phœnicia, in Ithaca, and even on snowy Olympus, where Zeus embraced Hera, enveloped in a golden cloud.

All the loves, and fears, and hopes, and aspirations of humanity, are piled up in an eternal treasury by the pen, which, could one but wield it as it deserves, would surpass in potency the mightiest magician's wand; but we feel the awkwardness of our fingers when we essay to touch this celestial instrument, which breathes music into language, calls the dead to life, and compels them to reveal their thoughts for the benefit of those who may come after; which brings together all ages, places, and conditions, and invests a few mystic leaves with the power of enlightening and moving like a god. Again, therefore, I say, "Blessed, and thrice blessed be he who first taught his race the art of chronicling their ideas for posterity!"

Yet, great as are the powers of the pen, it cannot always enable one to express all one feels. It is to be feared the vocabulary of humanity is not coextensive with its sensations. There are flavours and odours to which no name has ever been given; there are hopes which cannot be uttered, thoughts that find no correlative expressions, objects of sight which soar beyond the reach of language. At least I find it so.

My Indian friend, when he left me and retired to rest, was probably accompanied to his couch by

the celestial phantasies of Vaisunta. I remained alone on the deck, nestled in cushions, and smoking pipe after pipe. The night was wearing away rapidly, and the first infusion of light made itself felt in the atmosphere. One after another the stars began "to pale their ineffectual fires before the glory of the infant day." A sort of pearly, billowy luminousness hovered over the bed of Aurora, the brightness of whose eyes had scarcely as yet flashed into the firmament. Yet it was evident that within those curtains of the morning her form was stirring. Her bright face and bosom shot forth brilliant irradiations that eclipsed the stars, and by degrees her saffron tiara and golden hair flashed through the portals of the East, and gave the world the assurance of another day.

XVII.

Poets are excusable when they revel in rapturous expressions in seeking to portray the beauties of the dawn. It is a daily revelation from heaven. Travellers know no pleasure like that of beholding the cradle of Eos encircled by golden vapours, and greeted by the smiling earth, teeming with early incense, and braided with showers of pearls. The sea itself glitters with joy, and each of its billows is crested with a smile as the goddess steps forth from her chamber and inflames the infinite ether by her loveliness.

Here it is that words fail me. It happened that I lay opposite the East, which underwent in a few moments as many changes as the Polar firmament under the influence of the Northern lights. A struggle of all the elements of beauty seemed to be going on in the air, where God was calling into being a new creation to inundate the human soul with delight. The whole Orient seemed to be in a state of brilliant incandescence. Red, purple, gold, and azure, mingling, and intermingling, surging upwards, spreading on all sides, quivering tremulously as with excess of power, inflamed the heavens, as if to create a tabernacle worthy to canopy the head of Helios. The vapours which draped the sky could not be called clouds. They were merely semi-luminous bands, or curtains, or banners, fluttering round the chariot of the sun, which bounded above the line of the horizon, as if impatient to command the homage of the world. At that instant the waves assumed every variety of indescribable hues; —purple, emerald, saffron, coruscating, trembling, dying into each other, as the warm breeze came panting over them from the fiery embraces of the desert.

XVIII.

It always grieves me to descend from the poetical to the mere every-day concerns of this life, to eating and drinking, chatting and smoking,

and all those other trivialities that absorb so much of our time. I had just got comfortably into a conclave with gods and goddesses, and was making some very handsome compliment to Aphrodite, for whom I have always had a certain secret leaning, when little Selina, with laughing face, rushed out of the cabin to inform me that breakfast was ready.

I descended from Olympus with fewer strides than Poseidon himself, and in a moment felt all my human appetites at work. The aroma of coffee greeted my nostrils, and the appearance of cold roast fowls addressed the keener sense of sight.

Selina dragged me to my place at the table, and in a moment was on my lap, plunged in all the delicacies our stock afforded. My Indian friend soon made his appearance, with countenance as placid as moonlight. Like myself he loved children, and Selina, therefore, enjoyed a luxury of attentions more than enough to spoil any child but herself. She ate, and laughed, and chatted, and rolled about, as if the world had been made exclusively for her; and it is one of the pleasant points in my destiny, that I am always happy in the company of an agreeable child.

The captain presided—I wish I could say with frankness and hospitality. His face seemed to intimate that the good things before us were placed there rather for show than use. He evidently felt

a pang at their rapid disappearance, and was especially angry at the Jew, who dropped into the London sugar with malicious industry.

The Indian was imperturbably polite. Nothing could have tempted him to have uttered a harsh word to any one, or to take an affront, had there been any one savage enough to offer one to him. The consciousness of past happiness brooded serenely over his countenance, imparting to it an air of unearthly satisfaction. To him, Vaisunta was not dead, but a living presence, shedding, invisibly to others, a glory on his features, which no length of time could deprive of their beauty.

A long succession of Indian suns had imparted a clear dark brown to his complexion; his eyes were black and fiery, and he had that beautifully-formed mouth, and short upper lip, which confer so much grandeur on the face of man or woman. His forehead, lofty to a fault, was thinly shaded by hair of dazzling whiteness, which scarcely seemed to belong to his physiognomy.

He was immediately a favourite with every one, over whom his voice seemed to cast a spell. Involuntarily, the captain himself was all courteousness to him. The attentions he did not require, every one paid; and that not from any calculation of interest, but from mere instinct. The love of mankind was his inheritance.

XIX.

It would be as tedious to the reader as to me to describe minutely the sort of weather we encountered on our way to Malta. There was, of course, a certain allowance of storms; during one of which all the geese and fowls on board were drowned in their coops. This we all regretted; more, however, I fear, for our own sakes, than for theirs. But if we fancied that we had lost anything by the accident, we were mistaken, for, with a proper regard to economy, the captain served them up day after day, as if they had been fresh from the roost. Hunger is not fastidious. Drowned, or not drowned, it was all one to us: the sea air had rendered our appetites ravenous, so that we could almost have eaten the captain himself, had any unlucky wave reached his coop.

As ill-luck would have it, we had a Mohammedan on board, servant to one of the passengers. This poor fellow, conscientious in his way, was greatly perplexed by the minute directions of the Koran for the slaughtering of animals, whose throats are to be cut with a pious ejaculation, with the face of the butcher turned towards Mecca.

It had never been foreseen by Mohammed that one of his followers might be placed in circumstances where these observances could be scarcely practicable;

for example, when at sea he might be left nothing but Hobson's choice between drowned fowls and no dinner at all. Our stock was limited—our appetites large. At length, therefore, the worthy Muslim overcame his scruples; and hoping, perhaps, that the fowls had turned their heads towards Mecca when they were drowned, he picked the bones with as much gusto as any of us.

One night, when the storm was at its worst, I lay in my berth in the state cabin, watching the movements of the captain, who appeared to be in extreme perplexity. By the light of a little miserable lamp, he was endeavouring, as well as the rolling of the ship would permit, to consult certain maps and charts he had taken from a drawer for that purpose. It was clear he would never think of consulting a passenger, and believed, moreover, that I was asleep. I got up, however, and volunteered my counsel, which was to steer for the port of Derné, in Barbary.

He said this was his first voyage in the Mediterranean, and that he knew absolutely nothing of the African coast; but that if I were sure there was sufficient water for the vessel to enter, he would do as I wished. I replied that Captain Beachey had entered it with a ship of war; upon which he no longer hesitated, but turned the Falcon's beak towards Derné. I now went out to converse with the sailors on deck, where I learned that the vessel would infallibly go down in a very

short time, but for continual pumping, since the water rose in the hold at the rate of 18 inches an hour. One of their speeches was highly characteristic. They said they had a great mind to let the infernal old ship sink, because the stingy captain refused to give them additional grog during the storm. The merchant who owned the cargo, consisting of corn and beans, advised its being thrown over, to lighten the vessel; and this would have been done, but that, considerably before day, the wind abated, upon which we altered our course, and steered towards Malta.

XX.

Vary it as you will, a sea life is inevitably monotonous and tedious. Besides, I was now so impatient to be at home, for which I had abandoned a voyage along the shores of the Dead Sea, and a visit to Jerusalem and Constantinople, that had we been drifting through the isles of Paradise, I should have been insensible to their fascination. All I now longed for was a sight of the rock of Malta, the first earnest of my being in Europe. and really on my way home.

Homer had doubtless wandered over the same sea, and experienced the longing he ascribes to Odysseus, to behold the smoke curling up from his own chimney. No lapse of years can change the feelings of human nature. To roam is pleasant,

but to return is pleasanter. It is delightful, after the first agony of parting, to set out on a long journey to see strange lands, to realize long-cherished dreams, to saturate one's soul with knowledge, and one's eyes with seeing.

But the delight is infinitely greater of steering back towards one's own hearth, to one's home and household gods, to the place where one's eyes first opened on the light, and where, if we are fortunate, they will close upon it for ever. It is happy to live at home; it is happier to die at home. The distance to heaven seems shorter from that point than from any other. The heart may be whirled away from it by the passions, as the bird by a tempest from its nest; but when the desolating gust is over, both seek, with tremulous joy, the road back to the only spot where, in this nether world, the soul can possibly know repose.

I had wandered further than Odysseus, had dwelt among the lotus-eaters, had tasted of Nepenthe, which, according to mythology, made a man in old times forget his home and friends. But the lotus and Nepenthe had lost their power, and never did mother return at evening to her child with more eager longings, or with heavier doubts and fears, than I bent my way back towards Lausanne.

The most terrible of Asiatic plagues was threatening Switzerland at my departure. Had it been in my house? had it rendered my hearth desolate? These were the terrible questions I put to myself

incessantly, as, with straining eyes, I looked, during a calm, over the ship's bows, towards Malta, which then seemed in my mind fully to merit the epithets "*khanina*" and "*fior del mondo.*"

XXI.

At length, one evening, the sun having just descended in glory behind the waves, being on the eternal look out, I caught a glimpse of something in the west, which seemed much too solid and stationary for a cloud. "That," I said to the captain, "is Malta." With characteristic dogmatism he replied, "It is nothing but a pile of vapours;" but as the object did not change its shape, I persisted in my first belief, and my friend the merchant, who had lived in the island many years, perfectly agreed with me. Presently all on board, passengers, crew, and captain, recognised the features of the impregnable rock and bulwark of Christendom, over which, after innumerable vicissitudes, the flag of England now floats triumphantly.

Will it be believed, no sooner had it been determined that Malta was really in sight, than we began to speculate on the delicious strawberries we hoped on the following day to enjoy in the Lazaretto? No length of time will suffice to place some men beyond the limits of childhood. My companions had not tasted a strawberry for many

years. We were to be imprisoned twenty-one days, under suspicion of plague: no sublunary consideration, the life or death of the dearest friend, the ruin of families, the misery of hundreds, would suffice to obtain from the authorities the slightest shortening of that period.

The yellow flag floated at our mast-head, and death, in its darkest and most terrible form, might possibly be lurking somewhere in our cabins. We were therefore to be put in durance for the time specified; and if we could amuse ourselves with strawberries, mocha, and cigars, so much the better for us. If not, we might hang ourselves, for aught the governor of Malta cared about the matter.

I have not descanted on the anticipations of the Jew, which extended no further than the smiles of the Maltese Ghawazi. He was an epicure also in all that concerned the pleasures of the table; and though proceeding towards the place of his birth, and expecting shortly to be under the same roof with his mother, he experienced little delight at the idea. I could not envy him. According to his theory, he lived in a world without souls, and looked upon all around him as two-legged hogs of different sexes. His mind seemed to to have been smitten by a moral pestilence, under the influence of which all his passions, if he ever possessed any, as well as everything else that was respectable in his nature, had withered away.

XXII.

Evening darkened into night, and Malta disappeared from our view. Yet sleeping, at least for some hours, was out of the question. We paced the deck, talking, discussing, anticipating, till weariness at last drove away the less enthusiastic, to snatch, if possible, a few moments' slumber.

My Indian friend, however, though old, was not to be subdued. Beneath a furrowed brow, and locks of silver, he nourished a force and vitality of intellect that rendered him equal to any position in which he might find himself. Like all happy men, he loved sleep, which often forms the most brilliant part of our lives. This is the power that triumphs over time, distance, and death. By its aid we travel back over the wastes of years, revive the lost, reconcile the estranged, and surround ourselves with whatever we love most on earth, or anticipate in heaven. There is nothing in Homer more attractive than his admiration for sleep, on which he bestows the most affectionate and endearing epithets.

Shakspeare, too, speaks of it as that which "knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care." This is mere reflective praise; Homer's is instinctive, impassioned, like the rapture of a child. He talks of it as something which pours nectar and ambrosia about our souls, which lights up our pathway with the glances of beauty, envelops us in the soft mantle of love, and confers on all we behold a

brightness above what belongs to earth. The old, wandering Greek speaks of it indeed as the half-brother of death. In Hellas, however, death was not terrible, but beautiful; and instead of being represented, as with us, by a rattling skeleton, with scythe and hour-glass in hand, appears as a delicate child, with wings soft as those of Eros, a look of pensive melancholy, and leaning on a torch *reversed*, but still burning, to signify that the flame of intellect and affection survives the tomb.

"Blessed be the man who invented sleep," exclaims Sancho; "it wrappeth a man about like a garment." True, friend Sancho; but it doth much more. Out of its prolific and sacred womb issue forth nightly forms of exquisite loveliness, mountains whose heads touch heaven, meadows of inexpressible green, and rivers that roll o'er Elysian flowers their amber streams. Take the humblest of God's creatures, place him in a dungeon with fierce furies, and heavy chains about him—and sleep, with celestial wings, will descend to console him even there; will strike off his manacles, disperse the darkness which encircles him, and unfold before his kindling fancy an endless succession of sunny fields, where bees, with unceasing murmurs,

> "Hunt the golden dew
> In summer time; on tops of lilies feed,
> And creep within their bells to suck the balmy seed."

Yet, fascinating as sleep is, the Indian and I refused to taste of it the night before our arrival at Malta.

XXIII.

No pleasures are so pure, few more delicious, than the interchange of ideas between spirit and spirit. To taste of it is to be something more than a creature of clay. It was the recollection of this delight that inspired the Roman poet, when he spoke of the "*noctes cœnæque deorum;*" and more than most men I prize this pleasure.

We spoke of our Asiatic empire, of the means of humanizing, civilizing, and enlightening it; of disciplining the dark lips of its children to mould the sounds of its imperial language, which gives laws to half the intelligence of the world. With me, he thought it possible to breathe our mother tongue, like the breath of life, into two hundred millions of Asiatics, and with it to impart to them the thoughts and aspirations of men. There are languages which seem to be moulded for slavery, while out of others it is almost impossible to form a servile vocabulary. The English is the language of democracy—full of grandeur and simplicity—religious, deep-toned, and impassioned, like all those who love liberty. It has in it also something of fierceness, inspiring uneasiness in tyrants.

Many who desire to be wise above what is written affect to believe that the dialects of all countries must be equally expressive to those who speak them. But this is unphilosophical. Language.

being the instrument of thought, is grand or mean, impressive or cold, full of power or full of weakness, according to the character of those who speak it; and our mother tongue, thank God! has for centuries been gradually putting off every badge and token of servitude, and speaking to us more and more of equality and independence.

There is, therefore, a music in the English language, sweeter and more melliflous than the music of mere sound, a music of imperishable associations, of glorious memories, of victories achieved over despotism and superstition. And it was by this music that we hoped the soul of Asia might one day be awakened, as with the last trump, from the sleep of ages, and made to comprehend its kindred with the mind of Europe.

XXIV.

As the day dawned, I perceived that we had drifted to within a very short distance of Malta, whose small-pointed headlands, and low, rocky promontories, I beheld through the grey light, projecting into the surrounding sea. In some picture I have seen of the Adoration of the Shepherds, the painter's pencil has unfolded before the eye a dim landscape, full of poetical suggestions.

Malta now lay before me like a picture; the cool green waves, crested with white foam, serving as a sort of frame to it. No one, perhaps, can tell in what the charm of scenery lies; certainly it is

not in magnitude, or in mere disposition of parts. To discover all its beauty you must go back in some cases to the early history of the human race —to the patriarchs and their families, and imagine their tents still standing, and an air of poetry ascending from them towards heaven, like the smoke of incense. Malta looked to me like a verification of the Acts of the Apostles; and, in my mind's eye, I distinctly beheld St. Paul standing at night upon the beach, encircled by the wondering barbarians, and shaking the viper from his hand into the fire.

But Helios is not slow in the Mediterranean. Up streamed the light from the East, until the whole island stood relieved distinctly against the glowing sky. I wish our landscape painters would make a pilgrimage to the South, that they might be delivered from their frigidity. At present, their pictures are so cold that one must put on a great-coat to look at them. In the Mediterranean they might learn a different style of colouring, nature there being anything but a quaker. There is nothing she hates so much as drab or white, or russet grey.

In the morning, to be sure, while she is yet in her dressing-room, she likes to surround herself with a modest half-light; but when she has fairly got her veil and girdle on, she flames out in gorgeous hues, calculated to set one's imagination on fire. Malta, though a mere rock, was invested

by the lavish goddess with tints and hues, which might very well have become a landscape in Paradise. Its pinnacles seemed transparent with light, and the waves, as they laughed and frolicked before the breeze, rivalled the land and sky in brightness.

By degrees we caught sight of the city of Valetta, and of one of the most striking symbols of Great Britain at the same moment. This was the St. Vincent eighty-four gun ship, with all her sails set and decks manned, proudly rolling before the breeze towards the harbour. The governor lay dead in the city; and this having been intimated to the line-of-battle ship, she was now firing as many guns as there had been years in his life; so that her lofty and magnificent sides were every now and then enveloped in a cloud of white smoke, while the thunder from her guns boomed along the deep. It is permitted to every man to be proud of his country, and I never was prouder of mine than at that moment, meeting, as I then did, one of the mighty symbols of her power, carrying laws to the southernmost point of Europe.

XXV.

In the course of the day we were housed snugly in the Lazaretto, where we had assigned to us a magnificent suite of rooms, at the summit of the building. The apartment in which we habitually sat was at least forty feet square, by thirty-five in height, and

through spacious windows, commanded a splendid prospect of the harbour, a neck of land enclosing it on the sea beyond. The first thing we did was to prepare for dinner.

The Arab servant who had accompanied us from Egypt was, after the Eastern fashion, a clever cook, and the guardiano assigned to us by the Government boasted no mean talents in the same profession. Between them, therefore, we were served like the sons of Irish kings; and a friend in Valetta, having heard of our arrival, immediately sent us a hamper of claret and champagne, with abundance of strawberries and honey, and every other delicacy which Malta and the neighbouring island of Sicily could supply.

Imagine us now, therefore, sitting round a table resting on the solid floor, and not on the reeling and uncertain deck, with fruits and luxuries of all sorts piled up in profusion before us. Then came coffee and tea, and cream, and fresh rolls and butter—things we had not tasted for a month—and after that Turkish pipes, filled with Gebel Latakia, and kindled with acacia charcoal. We made up extempore divans, and reclined on them to our heart's content. No fear had we now of storms or bad weather. The place in which we were was one of the old palaces of the Knights, built of solid masonry, that had weathered many a tempest, and will, doubtless, weather many more. But one cannot command everything.

We had brought our beds with us, but no mosquito curtains, so that we anticipated the most fearful stinging at night; but my skin, bronzed by the sun of Africa, and impregnated with saline particles by the sea atmosphere, was anything but inviting to these winged gentlemen, who, after buzzing about me for some time, retreated quietly through the darkness, to seek more comfortable quarters elsewhere.

Most profound, therefore, was my sleep that night, and most delightful the cluster of dreams that descended on my head. From the window at Jolimont I looked out upon the Leman Lake, and saw the cloud-like summit of Mont Blanc gleaming in visionary splendour over the Savoyard Alps. In a little boat on the lake was my whole family, but neither oar nor sail could stir it. There it stood, fast as a rock in the midst of the water, and notwithstanding that there were miles between us, I could talk with the inmates of the boat, who had no power to impel it one way or the other.

XXVI.

From this perplexing situation I was delivered by Selina, who came bounding upon my bed like a gazelle, telling me it was time to get up, as the sun would do so in a few minutes. When I had obeyed her mandate, she took my hand, and led me out into the gallery, where, as we walked to

and fro, I soon found we were in the neighbourhood of another batch of friends who had preceded us by a week, on their return from the East. These consisted of three individuals, two young gentlemen and a disciple of Æsculapius, exceedingly ill-suited, and long ago tired of each other.

The physician, then verging upon sixty, was what, had he belonged to the other sex, would have been called an old maid. He was fidgety, wayward, crotchety, morose, though at bottom a right good fellow. His youthful companions, having nothing else to do or think of, delighted in teasing him, and would otherwise in all likelihood have died of *ennui*.

The doctor was an antiquarian, given to profound speculations on Champollion and hieroglyphics: and while he was, perhaps, plunged in the most interesting researches on an inscription of Ramesis, his wild companions would scream out, at the top of their voices—"Alice Grey," or "Love's young dream." If the doctor had never anathematized love before, he must have doubtless cursed it then.

When a man takes to the study of hieroglyphics, he generally gives up all acquaintance with the winged imp of Aphrodite. This, at least, was the doctor's case. There was no devil in Pandemonium less to his taste than this little Olympian vagabond: and therefore to be condemned daily to hear his praises chaunted by two raw Paphian recruits was no slight punishment.

XXVII.

With me the time could not hang heavily. I had my journal to bring up—notes to copy—letters to write, unluckily, none to receive—and a hundred other things to do, which filled up nearly the whole day; in the intervals, I mean, between breakfast and dinner, after which I either romped with Selina, or smoked with her papa.

There is, I suspect, no man who would not have thought that child a godsend in the Lazaretto. I have told the reader twice or three times already, that she was about seven years old, and as playful as a kitten. Here in Europe little girls often become demure about that age, or soon after. This, however, is not nature, but teaching. They are drilled into demureness, and, as far as concerns those with whom they come into contact, are utterly spoiled.

Selina was quite natural, and as agreeable a companion as a child could be. She had inherited her father's sense, without his gravity, and kept her mouth on the perpetual stretch with laughter. Of course she paid her respects with great earnestness to the strawberries, a bushel of which at least was every morning piled up before us on the breakfast table.

With all this assistance, I should have found the twenty-one days equal at least to seven years transportation, had it not been for my journal.

There is nothing like employment for carrying on the war with time. I calculated the days, hours, minutes which separated me from Lausanne, and the most interesting scenes often became insipid; but the journal stood my friend. There I entered my thoughts, communed with myself, noted down my projects, hopes, and expectations. Sometimes, also, I recalled the past, vividly, too vividly perhaps, for a man in prison.

XXVIII.

There came at length an incident to diversify our monotonous existence, and bring us a little to ourselves. Three or four doors from us, a man suddenly died of the plague, and as in that case the body is never kept, it was to be carried in the course of the morning along the terrace in front of our door, then religiously shut, and no one descended to enjoy a walk for several hours after.

Who the unfortunate traveller was I never could learn. The guardians could not or would not explain; all they appeared to know was that he had just arrived from the East with the plague about him, and he was confined in an apartment by himself, and that he died; whether with or without medical assistance I know not.

Priests refuse to enter in such cases the sick man's or sick woman's chamber to hear confession and administer extreme unction; the soul, unhouseled,

unappointed, unaneled, goes to its last account; and, in a few hours after the departure of the spirit, dust is rendered to dust in a neighbouring cemetery enclosed by high walls. The body of the stranger was put into a plain coffin, painted black, and borne hurriedly and silently along on a plain bier, by two muffled guardians.

People at a distance here in Europe are apt to talk very courageously of the plague, and a traveller who has made some impression on the public, dissertates on the subject with the utmost complacency. As far as my experience goes, it is very different when you are brought face to face with the pestilence, when you fancy it is mingled with every breath of air you breathe; when the dead body, decomposed, as if by magic, exhales mephitic particles into the atmosphere, and seems to infect and disorganize it. That would be the time to display indifference or stoical insensibility, but, among our party there was not one who showed it.

Every man's cheek seemed a shade paler, though my Indian friend was less affected than the rest. Of course Selina thought nothing about it, but said jocularly that the best thing to keep off the plague, was a good puff of Gebelee.

"Do let me light one for you," said she; "I can do it." So off she tripped, brought me the pipe, filled it with tobacco, and then fetching a little bit of charcoal from the furnace, at which the meat was cooking, kindled it in a few minutes, and put

the amber into my mouth. "Now smoke," said she, "while I play with your beard;" and throwing herself beside me on the divan, began the threatened operation immediately. From this I was called to see the coffin pass.

XXIX.

I have never yet been tired of life, or insensible to death. It was, therefore, with deep sorrow that I looked down on the body of that unknown man, whose children, perhaps, like mine, were at that moment playing round their mother, at the distance of some thousands of miles, and asking her when their father would return. Perhaps he was an American, whose home stood on the banks of the Ohio or Mississippi, so that it would be months before the dark tidings could be wafted across the Atlantic, to make his hearth desolate. I have a profound sympathy with the citizens of that great republic, who are now found wandering over all the scenes of ancient history, collecting stores of golden experience to beautify their glorious democracy.

It will, in times to come, be for Europeans to visit the banks of the Hudson, or the Missouri, to gain lessons in political wisdom. America is fast rising into the greatest of modern states, a sort of better England, born of liberty beyond the Atlantic. May her form of civil polity be as lasting as her language; and may every man

in the old world, who covets to be free-born, so think and speak with respect of that mighty union of republics, which has risen, as it were, within the memory of man, from a British colony to be a vast empire.

When we descended to the terrace in the afternoon, scarcely a syllable was whispered about the dead. He had passed silently and unlamented to his rest, and dread of the disease that struck him down induced the whole Lazaretto to observe the strictest silence on the subject. Every one feared to stir up the depths of his own imagination. It was remembered that, when the plague last broke out in Malta, ten thousand persons were swept off within a few weeks.

XXX.

It was not till some days afterwards that we ventured to make inquiries respecting the stranger, and to ask the guardians whether the plague was spreading in the Lazaretto: they replied in the negative. No further death occurred, or else the bodies were carried to their long home in the dead of night, that no alarm might be created. This, I believe, is not unusual, and it is certainly judicious.

The fancy of many persons is so wrought upon by the vicinity of the plague, that they die of terror. How I might have thought and

felt had I been alone, I know not; but the presence of several agreeable companions soon dissipated the idea of death, and we returned to our usual occupations as if nothing had happened.

The Sicilian strawberries were never once lost sight of, and every evening, after dinner, claret and champagne sparkled on our board. My Indian friend, however, tasted no wine. Tea and coffee were his only beverage, though of fruit he ate more than his share. For myself, I enjoyed all the good things that came before me, especially the strawberries and the champagne.

We kept very early hours, going to bed between nine and ten o'clock, and rising at four—the mornings being, at Malta, most fresh and delicious, and the sea-breezes full of health and vivacity. Still, long before the period of confinement had expired, we all longed for liberty, that we might cross over into Sicily, ascend its lofty mountains, and wander at will through its cliffs and valleys.

I had just caught a glimpse of Etna on the way out. I now pictured to my fancy the Vale of Enna, where Persephone, gathering flowers —herself, a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis was gathered.

XXXI.

Everybody acquainted with the tricks of travellers must instinctively shudder at the name of

Malta; since all who spend twenty-four hours ashore there think themselves privileged to repeat the story of the knights. But let my readers take courage. The moments of our brief intercourse are too precious to be wasted on topics so stale. We will stick to the present—to this bright spot in the regions of eternity which the sun now gilds, and makes beautiful with his beams. I have no inclination to look

"O'er the dark backward and abysme of time"—

to cheat my sight with the pantomime of mocking shadows which loom and look grand and colossal in the dreary distance.

God forgive me if I am wrong, but I am least of all mankind, perhaps, addicted to the worship of great names, dead or living. If one can be said to love the dead, there certainly have been among the people of past generations several, both men and women, whose memory I have taken into my heart of hearts.

Chief, perhaps, of these is an old man, short, ugly, fat, whose external and internal nature suggested to a great writer of antiquity one of the finest similes I remember to have met with. He compares him to certain cases commonly to be found, it seems, in the houses of those times, which, grotesque or deformed without, displayed, when opened, the beautiful figures of the gods.

With this dear old fellow I have a strange passion to converse; and, thanks to two of his young friends, who, I suppose, took down his rhapsodies in short-hand, I have gossipped with him a thousand and a thousand times. Our great dispute has always been about democracy. He lived in a republic, and loved it, and would not have exchanged it for any other form of government under heaven. But he was sharp-sighted, and could see its defects, and used to prate about them much too freely for my taste. Wise as he was, he could not possibly foresee what bad use would be made of his testimony. He took the liberty, however, we all take with the things we love, and found fault with his country himself, in the hope that he might thus prevent other people from doing so. He was mistaken, and instead of that has furnished weapons to the malignant, with which, from his own time to ours, they have been stupidly assailing the acropolis of liberty.

XXXII.

However, this is not all that I was going to say. I meant to apologise for not writing a dissertation on the Knights of Malta, and to explain my reasons for the omission. I am a sort of leveller in the matter of humanity, and think one man pretty nearly as good as another, provided he be tolerably easy tempered, and has anything to say. Homer,

and Æschylus, and Pheidias, and Plato, and Demosthenes, and Raffaelle, and Shakspeare, and Milton, I consider very agreeable people, but have no inclination to make idols of them.

It is very different, of course, with Sappho and Aspasia, and Cornelia, and Helouise, and Madame Roland. These with me are elevated by their sex, their beauty, their virtue, or their genius, into the very heaven of imagination. Nature makes no men too tall, physically or intellectually, for other men, while talking, to look them in the face. Even my fat friend knew how to bring down his Titanian intellect to the level of humanity, and could laugh, and joke, and talk nonsense with the best of them. If one can feel at home with him, therefore, one can surely do so with any one else.

As to the race of kings, and that sort of people, one knows very well what their grandeur is made of. They owe it entirely to their tailors, and goldsmiths, and lapidaries. Take away their jewels, their glittering chains, their rings, and fine clothes, and they are exactly like Jones or Tomkins—no better and no worse. Least of all, therefore can one worship them, unless one chooses to resemble the animal on which old Silenos used to trot at the heels of Dionysos over the plains of Asia.

Still, what I have said in the last paragraph but one is, I fear, susceptible of misconstruction.

Don't let the reader think I have any quarrel with poets and philosophers, or that I hold those cheap who have accomplished much good for mankind. Quite the contrary. I cannot worship because I love them; and perfect love casteth out fear, without which the reader well knows there is no worship. This word touches on too sacred a link in the chain of thought to be much dwelt upon in these humble pages.

Our souls were never meant to bow before each other. That act is holy, and belongs to One. All spirits in the universe are bowed by a fearful love before the Father of Spirits, and the higher and greater they are, the more cheerfully do they veil their borrowed glory, and bend before Him that made them. There is a line in a French poet which deserves to be introduced here—

"Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et je n'ai point d'autre crainte."

It is this feeling alone that can preserve us from the worship of humanity. We were never meant, I repeat, to be idols to each other; and there must, therefore, be something inexpressibly servile in the man who crooks the hinges of the knee before one of his own species.

XXXIII.

Enough, however, of this. Let me endeavour to recal what I enjoyed once, on the coming on of evening in the Lazaretto. All my companions, in-

cluding Selina, had retired to their bed-rooms, and were asleep—a very common thing after dinner. Instead of following their example, I piled up my Turkish pipe with fragrant Gebelee, and drawing an ottoman into the vast embrasure of the open window, looked out upon the tranquil bay. The sun, though fast descending, had not yet gone down.

It was summer. In the air there was a warmth and a stillness, a brilliance and a glory altogether indescribable. The little waves, that rippled to the unfelt breeze, were crested with purple light; and the orange-trees, streaked by the sun's rays with gold, exhaled their fragrance, like a spiritual balm, into the air. It came wafted to me I know not how, and, mingling with the smoke which rose, like that of incense, from the dusky bowl and amber mouth-piece of the pipe, ended in lapping my soul completely in elysium.

Yet was there a large infusion of melancholy in the pleasures of that moment. I watched eagerly the ebbing day, and asked myself what would be my thoughts supposing it were my last, supposing my soul to be fading away with that light, and sinking behind the horizon of existence. The idea seemed to link me to the dying day. I beheld, with a sort of internal shudder, the waves of darkness rolling rapidly, one after another, towards the west, invading the realm of light, encompassing it, rolling in upon it, reducing it to a speck, and then

extinguishing it altogether. The red glory vanished from the clouds, and Night, the imperial sister of Death, sat enthroned in all her majesty in the heavens.

I had gradually risen as the struggle between light and darkness was going on, but sunk back when it was over, and hid my face for a moment in the pile of cushions that rose behind me. Presently I resumed my pipe, self-possession had returned, and I looked out cheerfully into the quiet heavens, where the stars, like muezzins, stationed at the summit of that eternal minaret, seemed to be gently calling out in their language, "Arise, ye faithful, and pray!" prayer is better than sleep.

Just as this thought had entered with its soothing power into my mind, Abdallah (the slave of God) came in, bearing upon a tray two brilliant lamps, a pile of finjans, and a coffee-pot. Little Selina ran tripping at his heels, and, in a few seconds, a circle of merry faces flashed round the table. The merchant and the Jew were full of their dreams: they had, in fancy, been borne back to Alexandria, where visions of horse-beans and cotton bales had rejoiced their optics. The Indian, if he dreamt at all, had probably been wandering with Vaisunta through the perfumed groves of Ajmér. I re-lighted my own pipe, or rather Abdallah did it for me, and, all the rest following my example, we were soon, like the dwellers on old Olympos, enveloped in fragrant clouds, through

which dreamy voices penetrated at intervals to our ears. This was the way in which we generally ended the evening. We then retired, and were soon, by the hum of innumerable mosquitos, lulled to rest.

XXXIV.

There are several gentlemen of the Dutch school who, if they had been twenty-one days in the Maltese lazaretto, would have counted the stones in the whole building, and enable the reader to do so too; described the long shining esplanade, intersected at intervals by high walls furnished with doorways and strong doors, which stretched along its whole front, delineated the hanging eaves, the spacious windows, and the sheet of sunshine which rested upon the walls during the greater part of the day.

Their pen, quite magical in its minuteness, would have called up before our fancy the large stone staircases, with heavy balustrades, leading from the bottom of the building to the top. The lofty white rooms, the sounding corridors, the long galleries, with slight iron railings, projecting from the face of the building on a level with every floor, and forming so many pleasant walks for the prisoners—all these I must leave to the reader's imagination, merely observing, by the way, that Selina and I diligently explored every portion of the edifice accessible to us, walked a hundred times

on every gallery, peeped out through every window, and counted together all the flagstones on our department of the esplanade.

The steps, too, leading down to the water, I see them at this moment in my mind's eye. The lower ones wet, and green with fine sea-weed, where a lady, whose husband was in Persia, used to sit in her boat every evening to converse with our next-door neighbours.

She had a baby on her lap, which, though older and of the wrong gender, reminded me strongly of another baby, on the banks of the Leman Lake. We did not know that person, and of course, therefore, never spoke with her; but the situation in which she was placed imparted to her a sort of interest in our eyes. Indeed, a mother with a child on her lap can seldom be looked upon with perfect indifference.

I wish my parents had made a stoic of me, for then I should have gone through the world like a machine moved by clockwork, and kept ticking regularly to the end of the chapter. This unfortunately, was not the case, for which reason I grow mortally tired of monotony, and have no sooner had time to get used to a place, than I long to be out of it. To keep myself in countenance, however, I must say that my companions were a thousand times more tired of the lazaretto than I, and, with all my democratic propensities, longed more ardently for liberation. As I said before, I had my

journal to bring up, and made a companion of my pen during a large portion of the day. However, weariness came at last, and another week of imprisonment would probably have given me a fit of nostalgia.

Howard, the Don Quixote of our northern latitudes,—a comparison by which, I trust, I shall offend no man's prejudices, for even our philanthropist could not be a kinder or a better gentleman than the Knight of La Mancha—Howard,* I say, anathematizes lazarettos in his works. But these health-prisons, though often badly managed, may after all, be necessary, so long as the plague retains its ordinary characteristics. Should this disease die out, as it probably will, the lazaretto system may die with it. Indeed, from various indications, we are warranted in assuming that the plague has gradually, for some ages, been growing milder and milder, and that it will at length sink into the category of common marsh fevers.

"It is a long lane that has no turning," says the old proverb. At last the day of release arrived, and freed from all suspicion of plague or pestilence, we stepped into the boat, doffed our hats to the yellow flag, and then, quietly turning our backs

* See his life by Hepworth Dixon, an able and excellent work, the precursor of those remarkable biographies of Penn and Blake, which have earned for their author a reputation in both hemispheres.

upon it, rolled merrily away towards the wholesome portion of Valetta.

If the reader has ever been a prisoner, as I trust he has, he will exactly understand my sensations as I stepped ashore. All my connexion with Isis and Osiris was now at an end. I was really at home in Europe, since Malta forms as much a part of Great Britain as Kent or Middlesex. It is not, indeed, united to the jolly old island by a visible isthmus, but they are joined, nevertheless, by the subtle links of power which, while our countrymen remain true to themselves, nothing on earth can break.

XXXV.

I felt, as I stepped ashore, as free as thought, and walked up the streets of Valetta with much the same sort of air that one walks up Pall Mall or Piccadilly after a seven years' ramble on the Continent. Instead of breaking up and dispersing several ways, our little party, formed by accident, now kept together by choice.

We took lodgings at the same hotel where our next-door neighbours, liberated a few days before us, had already pitched their tents, all but the hypochondriacal doctor, who, too happy to escape from his musical companions, had taken refuge in the remotest corner of the city. I pitied the man very much. "Alice Grey" had persecuted him nearly to death, so that I know not whether he more

dreaded our society or the plague. To escape us, he sacrificed much that was worth seeing in Malta, and hastened to take his passage in a ship bound for Naples, leaving Sicily unvisited, rather than be tortured by the accursed "Alice Grey" during the whole of that luckless journey. It was fortunate that he did so, as his presence would certainly have spoiled some of our wildest and most agreeable adventures.

XXXVI.

If the reader be at all partial to a good dinner, he will pardon me for devoting a word or two to the one we enjoyed on the day of our liberation from captivity. We were resolved for once to be extravagant; and so he who was the most learned among us in the language of cookery, ordered heaven knows how many dishes to be got ready with the greatest possible speed. We appeared to have brought a month's hunger with us out of prison; and, when we sat down, imagined ourselves able to devour all the provisions in Valetta.

Alas! I now experience the miseries of ignorance, since I know not the names of any of those good things, except beef and champagne. With these Olympian delicacies, others equal in taste and costliness loaded our table, so that we feasted like so many grandees of Sybaris; after which came the coffee and the pipes. The ladies, I know, will forgive me, if I add, that I finished off the repast

with delicious tea and cream, a luxury I had not enjoyed for months.

In the evening we went to take a stroll on the ramparts—one of the noblest promenades in Christendom. Mohammed's observation on Damascus, which I have often repeated, already again came into my mind, and I involuntarily murmured to myself, this is too delicious! A faint perfume from the orange-flowers impregnated the breeze, which was at once warm and invigorating.

Our mirth knew no bounds; we talked, joked, and laughed, so as, I fear, to inspire the sober Maltese with very doubtful ideas of our sanity; but time and the hour wear through the smoothest as well as through the roughest day. Towards midnight we went to bed, intending to set out early next morning for the Citta Vecchia.

Our life at best, however, is but a mingled yarn. As I stood in a little ante-room, sipping a glass of lemonade, I heard close at hand the moaning of a child, and the soft and soothing tones of a woman, who was endeavouring to put it asleep.

"It is a poor lady," said the chambermaid, who, with a candle in her hand, was waiting to light me to my room; "she is a widow of an officer who died about a month ago, and, I verily believe, is kept alive only by the necessity of attending on that poor child; but it will never recover—no, never," cried the girl, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron. "I pity the poor lady, indeed I do, sir;

all her friends are in England, and of her husband's companions, if he had any, not one has ever dropped in to ask how she does."

Much saddened by this account, I went to bed in a humour very different from what I had expected. For some hours I could not sleep; the moans of the child were still audible, and every now and then I could hear the mother moving about to get it what it wanted. At last, however, every sound ceased, and I myself passed into the land of dreams.

XXXVII.

Should the reader happen to be fond of dust, he would have much liked to accompany us to the Citta Vecchia. For my own part, when I emerged from Valetta, mounted on a good stout mule, I imagined myself once more in the Libyan desert. There was nothing to be seen on all sides but white dust, a foot deep, at least, in the road, and of unknown depth on the fields and rocks around; while an active breeze whirled up clouds of it into the blue atmosphere, in the whole vast concave of which there was not a speck of vapour.

People may prate as they like of the northern skies, give me the blue dome towering into the empyrean, with nothing visible in it but the blazing sun, to bask in whose fiery rays is to live —I had almost said, to live the life of a seraph.

As we rose higher and higher on the mountains,

moving forward between low grey stone walls, Malta appeared before us like a panting Semele, scorched and calcined in the embraces of the god. Floods of glittering light went glancing down rocks and ravines to the sea, which stretched away on all sides to the verge of the horizon like a flood of molten lapis-lazuli or turquoise. The imagination, inundated as it were with animal spirits, discovered nothing but beauty in this extraordinary scene, composed of rocks, dust—a blue sea and a bluer sky.

XXXVIII.

When we had ridden about two miles and a half, our guide inquired if we would like to see a garden. This sounded like a joke; and I looked into his face to discover whether he was in jest or earnest. He was as grave as a crocodile; so we bade him lead the way to the paradise of dust, being fully persuaded that there existed nothing else in Malta. For some time we went on descending, winding, twisting, and hobbling, as mules are used to do when going down a rough flight of steps. Patience at length brought us to a high wall, where we dismounted, and were conducted by our Maltese Hermes into a sort of elysium.

The reader, of course, remembers the gardens of Irem, which, in the "Tales of the Ramad'han," I

have endeavoured to describe in the story of the Phantom Camel. We now beheld the same thing in miniature. A slight enclosure of grey stones separated the white desert without from the green paradise within. Trees, shrubs, flowers, planted in delightful terraces, conducted the eye to the bottom of a deep ravine, where there was a long sweep of delicious shade.

The traveller in the Sahara will remember with what delight he has seated himself beneath the shelter of some vast rock in the thirsty wilderness, screened from the blazing sun, and fanned by breezes of inexpressible softness. Though almost as fond as a salamander of heat, I confess I experienced the most exquisite sensations in strolling through the odoriferous shrubs down towards the bottom of the valley. All sorts of sweet-scented flowers seemed to fling up their fragrance around us as we passed. Among others there were the stock, gilliflower, the pink and the carnation, redolent of England, of home, and of boyish hours.

However case-hardened a man's heart may be by travel and intercourse with the world—if these things in truth do ever harden a heart that was once soft—I hold it to be impossible to resist, in a distant country, the reminiscences of home; and to an Englishman pinks and carnations are the most familiar of familiar things. In all likelihood, he has pulled them and inhaled their perfume, while

walking through shady alleys, trimmed with box. in his mother's hand.

Blessed days those, when the heart knew nothing but love—when eyes, the tenderest in the world, lighted up our path—when God seemed to speak to us through a woman's voice—when the whole world was to us made up of flowers and sunshine. Thank heaven! I had not yet lost the relish of existence; and as flowers have always been to me a sort of mute friends, I inhale with ecstacy their familiar scents.

At the bottom of the garden there was a beautiful fountain, over which a part of the rock arched like a grotto. The water gushed forth from a dark fissure, and fell splashing into a long artificial basin. which supplied the refreshing moisture that had converted loose dust into a fertile soil, covered the rocks around with plants and trees, and created a spot of unfading verdure in the midst of barrenness and desolation.

Among the holiest and purest of human feelings is the love of nature, when linked, as it always ought to be, with that of humanity; and perhaps our universal mother never speaks more soothingly to the heart than in gardens. Here, according to our earliest traditions, God first placed the parents of our race; and it is perhaps some reminiscence of this primitive truth that links our fancy so closely to flowers, and green alleys, and bowers. and fruits of a thousand hues.

Language, in many cases is extremely flexible and accommodating, and enables us to paint the thoughts and emotions of our heart for the pleasure or pain of others; but sensations very often defy the power of words. Tastes and smells are almost infinite in number, yet how poor is the vocabulary by which we seek to express them! Besides, we are never exclusively under the influence of any one sense or thought; all the elements around combine to affect our imaginations at once. Hope and memory, ideas of the absent, the lost, the changed, the dead, mingle with all we feel, and rejoice or sadden, elevate or depress us, as they sweep in alternate gusts over our souls.

XXXIX.

In a short time we were on the road again, following the noses of our mules towards the Citta Vecchia.

If sadness had crept over me in the garden, it soon yielded like a cloud to the wonted influence of the sunshine and the breeze. On we went, laughing and chatting, and puffing our cigars, till we at length reached the old city of the knights, perched on the apex of the island, and commanding a view of its entire circumference, and of much of the blue Mediterranean beyond.

If there were any Muses left in these days of steam-engines and electric telegraphs, of political

lethargy and physical excitement, I would invoke them to descend to my aid with poetical phrases and classical figures of speech, since I desire to lay a picture before the reader which requires the gentlest touches and the most delicate tints.

I have the Citta Vecchia before me, distinct and lifelike, in my mind's eye, but when divested of the colours of imagination, and translated into the cold region of language, it will, I fear, lose very much of its beauty. It does not, as I recollect it, at all resemble the habitual dwellings of mere creatures of clay. It is a city of sunshine, a cluster of dreamy roofs and towers invested with golden light, and resting, as it were, against a sky of inexpressible blue. At the moment of our arrival I suppose all the inhabitants were taking their siesta. Not a sound was heard in the streets. No man, woman, or child appeared to greet us. Here and there, on a window-sill, or at an open door, a few dreamy cats, with half-closed eyes, sat purring in the sun, while innumerable grey lizards glanced up and down, like diminutive shadows, over the greyer walls.

XL.

Standing on a breezy eminence, there is generally at Citta Vecchia some movement in the atmosphere, whose invisible currents, as they float round church towers and ruined palaces, shook the dilapidated casements, and made one imagine one-

self in a ruined city. As far as the eye could at first perceive, all human life had, in fact, been drained out of it; but when we entered the yard of what must, I suppose, by courtesy, be called an inn, the clatter of our mules' hoofs upon the stones, with a loud shout thrice repeated from our Valetta guide, roused a number of lazy stable-boys, who rolled out of a quantity of straw at the bottom of the yard, like so many fat maggots out of a cheese.

Two of them undertook the care of the mules, while a third conducted us into the house, where, at a parlour window commanding a view down the steep brow of a hill all the way to the sea, we sat in cool indolence, while our nondescript meal, neither dinner nor breakfast, was getting ready. All my companions had been accustomed to the ways of the East, and loved to take a nap in the middle of the day. Scarcely, therefore, had they seated themselves before they were fast asleep, gently, perhaps, yielding to the genius of the place, which appeared to invite one to enter upon a state of everlasting repose.

When they had all joined the dreamers of Citta Vecchia, I went out into the garden, and there, on a stone bench, beneath a spreading tree, which stretched like a roof over me, I, with the aid of flint and steel, lighted my cigar, and gazed through its tiny clouds on the curious landscape before me. I could dwell through a folio volume on the sort of

delicious ecstacy into which the climate often throws one in those latitudes. One is too happy to think; one remembers or hopes, one indulges longing, and yearns for sympathy.

All sorts of bright ideas and agreeable images float through the mind, scarcely leaving behind them a trace of their passage. But there is no strenuous mental exertion, no fierce excitement, no impetuous desire to struggle with mankind or the the elements. Nature rocks, coaxes, and, as it were, pats one on the cheek, and bids one recline in peace on her bosom.

In this state of existence one often becomes metaphysical, and speculates on all things possible and impossible. But I feel, as I recal those sunny moments, the languor of the melting South creep over me—its monotony infuses itself into my language, and the reader and I would soon, I fear, be fast asleep together were I not to change the topic.

XLI.

Upon what in the Citta Vecchia should I dwell? It contains churches, inns, and private houses, with a sprinkling of small formal gardens, like most other cities. But it is not in any of these that you are to seek for its characteristics. It looks like a nest of grasshoppers that have forgotten how to chirp. It almost seems in my memory as if we had never heard a sound there, save what we uttered

ourselves, as we expressed our astonishment at its silence.

Yet I remember there was an old priest, a fat impersonation of ease and indolence, who contrived to gossip a little, in a slumberous way, about the history and antiquities of the place, to which, poor man, he attached some importance. What he said resembled the annals of the Lotophagi. People there will hardly give themselves the trouble to come into the world, or, when they have been admitted involuntarily and by chance, to go out of it. It is a place in which we might doze on for ever—

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

Yet if there are any pretty women in Malta, it is in Citta Vecchia. Nowhere in the East could you find larger, darker, or more loving eyes. To say they were impassioned would be to give a wrong idea of them; they are calm, placid, and serene, like an Egyptian night. There is an intense composure in the countenance, as if no emotion had ever stirred it.

I should say they have a world of happiness in themselves; and that, mild, gentle, affectionate, with manners as primitive and simple as those of the golden age, they know how to communicate their measured happiness to others. I may be mistaken, as I only saw them like pictures; but

this is the impression I carried away with me, and as I never afterwards had an opportunity of correcting it if wrong, it will most likely continue to be my impression for ever.

In the evening we remounted our mules, and returned towards Valetta. The Indian, in a strange mood, talkative and taciturn by fits, kept close to me nearly all the way. I saw he had something on his mind which he was trying to communicate, but could not. His conversation vaulted at a bound from India to England, and back again. He talked of the past and the future, but sedulously avoided the present. The truth was, he meant to disappear next morning, but did not like to say so, as I learned from the note he left behind for me at the hotel.

XLII.

When I reached my apartments I felt inexpressibly sad and lonely. There was a struggle going on in my mind, which, unless the reader has experienced something similar, he or she will not understand. I had now been nearly a year from home, between me and which there still lay many a weary league of sea and land.

This, by the force of imagination, I now sought to annihilate. Indescribable longings came over me. I stretched myself on my sofa and endeavoured to call up around me distant figures, to

mould the air into the features of those I loved, to invest ideas and recollections with flesh and blood, to hear the voice of children, to behold the presiding presence of home.

In vain; my room continued empty, and all my efforts only rendered the sense of loneliness more painful. The wind, which had arisen as night set in, howled about the house, and entered with a sepulchral sound through the Venetian blinds. At times this noise is pleasant, at least to me, and I have for whole hours listened to it, or to the pattering of rain against the window as the heavy showers sweep over the earth.

It was different now; all that is melancholy in nature seemed to have infused itself into the wind, which could not have been more sad had it come to me through a whole forest of hearse-plumes. What would I not then have given for the sight of one friendly face, for the sound of one familiar voice?

Never did I more keenly experience the misery of being a stranger in a strange land. I no longer felt the connexion of Malta with England; no longer perceived that localities are things indifferent; no longer put faith in the fantastic theory that one may be happy anywhere. The circle of our happiness is wonderfully narrow, circumscribed by the domestic hearth and the ties that hallow it. Amusement may be found all over the world. Strangers may give it, friends

abound with it; but the whole universe, with all its gorgeous sights and shows, cannot fill the heart, which yet is too small by far to contain the flood of delight inspired by one word of love.

I was in this temper of mind when the chambermaid, rushing into the room, exclaimed—

"For God's sake, sir, follow me!"

I arose instantly and did so, into an adjoining bedroom, where, half doubled up on the carpet, I saw the figure of a lady in black. Placing the candlestick on a table, the girl now assisted me in lifting her up. She had fainted, and it was with some difficulty that we brought her to herself. As soon as consciousness returned, and she caught a glimpse of my swarthy countenance and beard, she shrank timidly back, and appeared much alarmed; observing which, the maid said—

"This, madam, is an English gentleman, who lodges in the next apartment, and when you fainted I ran in to beg his assistance."

Somewhat reassured by this account, the lady now thanked me, and I replied by inquiring whether her child was better. She said she feared not; after which, as I could be of no further use, I bowed and retired.

XLIII.

Presently the girl who waited on us both, came into my room, and inquired if I should want any-

thing that evening; upon which I desired her to bring me some coffee, and, lighting a cigar, sat down to smoke.

The maid, whose name was Maria, soon returned, bringing the coffee apparatus, with two cups, which made me fancy she intended to invite herself to take coffee with me. Her intention was very different. She took up the coffee-pot, held it doubtfully in her hand, looked first at it, then at me, as if debating some important matter in her mind. At length she said, in a gentle, deprecating tone.

"Sir, I wish you would let me take a cup of this coffee to the lady in the next room;" then lowering her voice almost to a whisper, she added, "she is very poor."

"Take the coffee, Maria," said I, "and something to eat along with it."

"Perhaps," replied the girl, "I had better proceed cautiously. I have often, of my own accord, made a small addition to her breakfasts, and suppers, but I have never yet ventured to take any thing into her room that has not been ordered. However, I mean to try now, as I know she is faint and ill. Nearly all she has is expended on her poor child, who, I am sure, sir, can never recover."

"You may, perhaps, be mistaken," answered I. "Can't you bring it in to me? I should much like to see it."

The girl replied, it was too ill to be removed;

and then pouring out a foaming cup of coffee for my neighbour, lightly tripped out of the room with it. By what force of eloquence Maria prevailed, I know not, but the lady drank the coffee, and presently the maid returned with a triumphant countenance, observing that she had succeeded, and was now going down stairs to make something for the child.

"You are a good girl," I observed, "and God will bless you for your charitable feelings. Let both child and mother have whatever they require, and put it down to me. They are in some sort relations of mine, being descended from Eve as I am."

Maria left the room with a smile, and ever after appeared to wait on me with double pleasure. When I got up in the morning, my first inquiry was about the sick baby. The maid replied, with a shake of the head and in a half whisper. it was much worse, and would not live long to trouble anybody. I replied that, sick or well, a child could never be thought troublesome.

"You must have children of your own, sir, I am sure," said she.

"Seven of them, Maria," I replied; "if it please God they are all as I left them."

"Hark," she exclaimed, "the lady calls me: wait a while, I will be back presently."

XLIV.

When she did return it was to invite me into the next room to see the baby. The mother, whom I found sitting by the bed-side, thanked me for the interest which Maria had told her I took in her child. Her whole face had just been washed with tears, but she had carefully wiped it, and seemed desirous to look composed, if not cheerful.

The baby was then in that kind of disturbed slumber during which the lips mechanically close, and in the act of breathing are opened again with an effort. The cheeks were flushed, the tiny hands hot and dry, yet an inexpressible beauty hovered over the face. It was a little boy, moulded like a seraph, with lofty forehead, around which the curling ringlets hung in thick clusters. There is in childhood, of whatever sex, much that is feminine, or, I might perhaps say, much that is angelical. In that first stage of our existence, ere the world has as yet breathed its corrupting breath upon us, we seem to be denizens of heaven, transported into another sphere.

Next to being a child is, in my apprehension, to love children. The heart, as we look at them, lays aside its worldliness, and yearns for whatever is pure and holy. In its utmost depths, it murmurs in the language of the Blessed One: "Suffer little children to come unto me." Above all, this is the

case when sickness has laid its heavy hand on them, when their souls are about to be intercepted in the very gates, as it were, of life, and sent back, pure and unpolluted, to the Source of all existence.

Maria's eyes, as she gazed, were filled with tears, and it would, perhaps, be wrong in me to pretend that my own were wholly dry. The mother looked anxiously in both our faces, as though she would read in them her baby's destiny. I fear our looks were not encouraging; for, hiding her face in the bedclothes, she began to sob as though her very heart would burst.

When she had become a little calmer, I inquired whether any physician had been to see the child? She replied in the affirmative, but added that now she could not afford it, and no one came. I looked at Maria, who understood me and left the room, and presently returned, bringing in a physician with her.

XLV.

If the reader be a man of the world, let him pardon my simplicity when I say I have great faith in the goodness of human nature. I have stood more than once with professors of the healing art, beside a sick bed, and have never witnessed that callousness or indifference which some attribute to the profession. It is not in general, I think, the result of science to harden the heart. It certainly was not in the present case; for as the old man

took the baby's hand in his he seemed to me like a father watching over his own offspring.

"Is there," exclaimed the mother, in a tone of deep agony, "Is there any hope for my child?"

"Life, madam," replied he, in a soothing tone, "is in the hands of God."

He then bent his eyes upon the ground, and, appearing as though he saw nothing, walked out of the room. Presently his servant came, bringing medicine, for which he was instructed to receive no payment. The children of Æsculapius often love their profession for its own sake, and bless God that it enables them to minister to the sick and the afflicted, without permitting one sordid idea of profit to mingle with their benevolence.

There is a sort of freemasonry in sorrow which opens the heart even to strangers. All men, in seasons of deep grief, seem made to be relied on; and whoever remembers that he himself had a mother, will endeavour to respect and comfort a mother under such circumstances. I felt that the angel of death stood beside me in the room, that with a pencil fetched from the farthest realms of eternity, he was painting the baby's face with celestial white, that he was preparing to wrap its little soul in his wings, and bear it to everlasting rest in the bosom of God.

The mother likewise felt all this, and deep and poignant was the anguish she experienced. For herself she seemed not to have a thought to spare.

No idea of her own sufferings mingled with her bursts of sorrow. Life in her appeared to be but a subsidiary thing, meant to support life in her child. It was still metaphysically in her bosom as much as it had been materially a few months before. It was not, however, as part of herself that she loved it; to have preserved its life she would have sacrificed her own, not only with thankfulness, but with joy. If it may be said without impiety, I would say that God never created anything purer than a mother's love.

XLVI.

All the arguments that suggested themselves I used to mitigate the grief of this lonely woman. I then returned to my own apartment, where, in the course of the afternoon, as I was entering some notes into my journal, Maria came to me and whispered that the child was dead.

No wild paroxysm of grief accompanied the departure of his soul. His mother hung over him in silence, and watched the ebbing breath till all breathing had ceased, and the unutterable calm of eternity rested on its baby features. She then sunk senseless beside its little form upon the bed, and remained there till she was carried by Maria and another girl into an adjoining chamber.

The remainder of her sad story may be soon told. With the master of the house, a man of kind and

friendly disposition, I accompanied the remains of the child to the grave, from which the mother was removed with difficulty.

Our burial service, full of grandeur and sublime pathos, sounds daily, through their sorrow, to millions, like a voice from heaven. The words " I am the resurrection and the life," which break the deep silence of grief, or in part quiet its sobbings, appear to bridge over the awful space between time and eternity; language of greater significance and power could not be piled up before the portals of death. Philosophy need not be ashamed to own that here religion takes out of her hands the task of comforting the soul, of inspiring hope in the midst of the ensigns of despair, of anticipating the choral symphonies of cherubim and seraphim, and of withdrawing a little the awful veil which conceals from all finite existences the face of God. From the lowest depths of our souls, through all the weight and pressure of its agonies, we bless the Christian apostle who alone of all mankind has known how to subdue, through holy eloquence, the terrors of the grave. Marvellous are the splendours of language in which that man everywhere invests his thoughts; but in the 15th chapter of Corinthians, he seems not so much to be lifted up to the third heaven as to contain all heaven within himself, which he pours forth in floods of glory for the enlightenment and solace of our entire race. Here Christianity lays aside all the pomps and ceremonies of a mere

system of worship, and shines forth as a pure and undefiled religion coming directly from God, and commissioned, if we are willing, to lead us all to him, and to crown us with that peace which passeth all understanding. Again and again have I listened —and who has not?—to that awful service, when the weight of suffering has almost rendered me insensible to its beauty. But on this occasion, the melancholy I experienced was not too oppressive to be reconciled with devout attention. The unhappy mother, scarcely able to support the weight of her own youthful frame, had evidently lost all power of reflection, and endeavoured to precipitate herself into the grave, in the hope of terminating her sorrows there. With some difficulty, however, she was carried back to the hotel, and in a few days, bowed down and heart-stricken, took her departure in a vessel for England, where, I trust, the kindness of friends and perhaps the sympathy of a mother (for she was young enough to have one) in time reconciled her to her loss—so far. I mean, as the heart can ever be reconciled to the loss of what it loves.

XLVII.

If you have ever sat during the first dawn of summer on a rock overlooking the sea, and felt the chill diffused through the atmosphere by the passage of a long continent of clouds over the sun, you will

be able to sympathise with what, during a few days, I experienced at Malta. But sunshine in such cases is sure to succeed. Nature is full of variety, and over the whole surface of our life sprinkles abundantly both smiles and tears.

In front of the old palace of the Knights, now the Government House, there is a large open space, whither, on the coming on of evening, I used constantly to repair to smoke and meditate. Sometimes I had the whole place to myself, the rest of the population being better or worse employed. All day I had something else to do, visiting churches, examining the rock granaries, in which the bread of years is securely housed for the garrison and inhabitants of Valetta, or viewing the arms and armour, bequeathed to the admiration of the present age by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

On all these things your professional travellers complacently dilate. I might perhaps exclaim with Correggio, "Anch'io, sono, pittore," for it would be still possible to infuse freshness into a picture of what is beheld at Malta; but the reader has doubtless already had enough, and more than enough, of descriptions—besides, I longed to be in motion, and nothing, therefore, was so welcome to me as the announcement, one evening, that the speronara was ready to take us on board at ten o'clock, to make the passage between Valetta and Girgente.

On this occasion I experienced a loss not easy

to be supplied. I had brought along with me from Egypt half a dozen bottles, not of champagne, claret, or madeira, but of pure Nile water, which I meant to carry along with me to England. Of these, in my hurry, I left five behind on my sitting-room table at the hotel. I hope Maria considered them as a present, and drank their contents herself. The sixth bottle is now in a closet over my head, sweet and pure as ether, as if kept hermetically sealed, it will continue a thousand years.

The Ptolemies, as the reader knows, used to send to their sisters and daughters, married to foreign princes, a supply of Nile water, as the noblest present they could bestow on them. It is certainly the sweetest water in the world; and if the Pasha were my friend, he could scarcely oblige me more than by following the example of the Ptolemies.

XLVIII.

About ten o'clock at night, as I have said, we descended, with bag and baggage, a long flight of steps, cut in the rock, to where, in a dusky creek, we found the speronara heaving and tossing on the waves. A dim lantern, held by a Sicilian sailor of most uncouth appearance, lighted the plank by which we passed from the rock to the boat. I had little Selina wide awake in my arms, quite excited to be at sea again. Like me she had got tired of Malta, and longed to be climbing the mountains

of Sicily, which her father and I had so often described to her.

A speronara is a boat open for three-fourths of its length, but with a small cabin at the stern, into which one may retire during rain and blowing weather. My companions did so at once, for the purpose of supping and composing themselves to sleep. As I am never indifferent to the good things of this life, I joined them at supper, which was one of the most delicious I ever tasted, consisting of delicate fish freshly caught, and cooked according to the finest principles of the art—that is to say, I know not how. Part of the secret, perhaps, was, that we had brought with us a good appetite on board; for hunger, as the old proverb says, is the best sauce.

After supper my friends, as I said, lay down to sleep, while I went out to smoke and chat with the sailors, and enjoy the appearance of the sea and sky. It was a delicious night. The breeze was just strong enough to send the speronara, with her ample sail, spinning along the waves, which, with her sharp prow, she cut into foam and dashed on either side like snow. The rocks descending from the cliffs of Malta go down to an unknown depth in the Mediterranean, whose bed in this part of the Sicilian sea is often disturbed by earthquakes.

We soon, in the darkness, lost sight of land, and within the limits of our bounded horizon could see

nothing but sea and sky. Most persons, I suppose, are fond of the night, especially when the everlasting vault glitters with its infinite lamps, suspended there by the finger of God. For myself, I partake something of the old Sabean idolatry, and almost worship the stars, which have reigned their brilliance into the most beautiful eyes that ever adorned our earth, and, from Eve downwards, have inspired pensive thoughts in the minds of women.

XLIX.

The Sicilian sailors appeared to share in this sentiment; and one of them, older than the rest, related, as we swept along before the wind, a short story, connected more or less with the stars.

"There was formerly," he said, "on the southern coast of Sicily an immense castle, inhabited by a prince of Norman descent, proud of the honour of his family, and resolved to transmit it with undiminshed splendour to posterity. He had three sons, and a daughter, who had scarcely entered upon the period of youth ere the old man died. By his daughter he was sincerely lamented, by his sons not at all, since they rejoiced at becoming their own masters, and hoped to enjoy inexhaustible pleasures in spending the great wealth their father and forefathers had amassed.

"Close to the neighbourhood lived a gentleman of

moderate fortune, who had an only son, devoted to study and retirement, who spent many hours of the night in watching the stars and constellations, which appeared to infuse into his mind a portion of their own grandeur and purity. Long before her father's death, he had seen and loved Eleanor, the young Norman lady, and was not without hopes of ultimately calling her his bride; but the brothers, addicted to strife and war, despised his peaceful habits, and used frequently, in their sister's presence, to refer contemptuously to the ballad-singer, as they denominated Gulielmo San Gennaio, because he was a poet.

"They were all three fond of the sea, and of a roving life; and when they put forth in their galley, and swept along the coast of Africa, were often supposed to bring home more wealth than they had honestly earned.

"Gulielmo, during these voyages of theirs, used sometimes to see Eleanor, who spoke to him from her latticed window, and at length promised to fulfil what, she believed, had been her father' intention, and to become his wife. These interviews, however, having been discovered, and betrayed to the three brothers, were interrupted by their setting a guard over their sister as often as they went to sea.

L.

"Gulielmo now suddenly disappeared, and was not heard of for many months. Eleanor went to her latticed window, and looked down into the ravine, where often, at early dawn, she had beheld his form among the trees. Month after month passed away, and no news came of Gulielmo, whom her brothers sneered at as a coward, because he had been scared away, as they said, by their half jocular menaces.

"However, as he had now proved himself wanting in manhood, they threatened, should he again appear, to treat him with the utmost scorn, or even to hurl him over the black cliffs into the sea below. They had numerous retainers, who were ready to follow them by sea or land, and to perpetrate all manner of crime and violence at their bidding. They were always suspected of committing robbery on the high seas, though no one was able to bring the charge home to them; and the Government, itself subsisting by injustice, winked at their proceedings, which brought much supposed wealth into Sicily.

"Nearly opposite the castle of the brothers, at the distance of some miles in the sea, was a black rock, several hundred feet high, which was believed never to have been climbed by man. At night, strange noises issued from the caverns by which it

was perforated on all sides, barkings and howlings like those of tortured spirits.

"The Normans in their galley always steered clear of this rock, held generally in superstitious terror by the inhabitants of the coast.

"One day, however, towards the middle of summer, the figure of a man was beheld on the summit of the black rock, engaged in attentively watching the movements of the Norman galley, then steering gallantly towards the south. All day the figure maintained one position, so that it might have been mistaken for an image of stone. Towards night, the same spot on the rock was occupied by a bright flame, which, having blazed up brilliantly twice or thrice, collapsed, and was extinguished.

"About an hour afterwards a large ship, dark and portentous-looking, came bounding along the waves from the east, and, pausing for a moment before the black rock, passed on towards the Norman castle. There, in the entrance of a small creek, it cast anchor, and remained motionless till dawn.

LI.

"Shortly after the day had broken, the galley of the Norman chiefs was seen to approach from the south. Its deck was crowded with men, its sails swelled gallantly to the breeze, and as it approached near, the sounds of revelry and rejoicing were distinctly heard. On the black ship in the creek no

sign of life appeared. Its sails flapped idly to the mast, its yards slanted obliquely, as if they had forgotten their office, its oars, raised above the water, rested uselessly in their port-holes. It seemed to have been deserted by its crew.

No sooner, however, had it been beheld by the principal among the Norman chiefs than a sudden paleness invaded his face. He gave immediate orders to tack; and the galley swept round, as though with the intention of putting back towards Africa. No such idea, however, was entertained. The brothers only wished, before coming to action, to consult a moment together, review their followers, and urge them to display, in the coming encounter, the hereditary courage of their race.

The black ship was a Greek pirate, well known on the waters of the Mediterranean, though it had seldom before carried its depredations so far westward. Suddenly, as if by an effort of voluntary motion, the black mast detached itself from the rocks, swung round, and moved seawards to the encounter of the Normans. Its deck now swarmed with swarthy faces, and resounded with the clash of arms. There was a terrible panic on board the Norman galley; and though no idea of flight ever suggested itself to the brothers, they experienced some emotions of terror as they advanced to meet the attack of the redoubtable foe.

LII.

"There were no guns in those days, but spears, and swords, and battle-axes, which now on both decks flashed and gleamed in the sun. The pirates from the east seemed to be animated by unusual ferocity; and as the prows of the galleys met, leaped on board the adversary in throngs, bore down everything before them, killing and flinging the Normans overboard, as though they had been so many bales of merchandise. Two of the brothers had already disappeared; and the third, retreating before the piratical captain, who waved back his followers with his hand, at length made his last stand near the rudder.

"Presently the two chiefs were engaged in hand-to-hand encounter. They fought long and desperately. Again and again did their swords seem on the point of entering each other's breasts; but, by degrees, the strength of the Norman failed, and he sank on the deck, beneath the resistless vigour of his antagonist, who, bending down towards him, and clutching him fiercely by the throat, muttered in a low voice,—

"'Am I a coward now?'

"'Gulielmo,' exclaimed the prince, 'do not spare me; I am justly punished.'

"'I am glad you acknowledge it,' replied the victor; 'but my triumph terminates not here.

Both your brothers are living—not one of my followers would have harmed them for his head; and you shall all three witness this day, in your own castle, my union with Eleanor. After this you will behold me no more. I shall return with her into the far Ægean; and she who, had you been less haughty and insolent, might have passed her days peacefully with me in my father's halls, must now be a pirate's bride, whose name for ages will be pronounced throughout the East with terror.'

"The battle was now at an end, the black galley steered towards the castle, dragging the other after it as a captive. Gulielmo accompanied by the three brothers, ascended the rock, and, in the chapel of the castle of their ancestors, made Eleanor his wife in the presence of all their retainers, who cowered submissively before the pirates of Greece.

"Towards evening, Gulielmo returned to his galley, which, to the sound of martial music, put forth to sea, plunged into the darkness of the night, and was never more seen on the Sicilian shores, though the names of Gulielmo and Eleanor are still fresh among the traditions of the Mediterranean. She gave birth, it is said, to a race of pirate chiefs, whose valour knew no decline till their glory was extinguished by advancing civilization."

LIII.

When the sailor had concluded his narrative, I took out my cigar-case, and passing it round, every man was soon supplied with the instruments of fumigation. We then began the magical process, and conversed between the whiffs about a variety of things connected with the sea over which we were sailing. No doubt the reader has already made the discovery that I am no naturalist, and will, therefore, feel little surprise if I often describe what I saw without attempting an explanation. If he be a philosopher, he can explain everything for himself; and, if not, he must rest content with his ignorance, as I do.

The sea, it would seem, in those parts, is thickly sprinkled with the substance, whatever it be, which produces phosphorescence at night. At the conclusion of Lady Eleanor's story, we entered upon one of these bright lakes or patches, in traversing which the speronara seemed to be ploughing an ocean of molten diamonds. The spray, as it curled upwards around the boat's prow, was converted into sprigs of light and jets of brilliance, which looked like the contrivance of sea-gods to light their goddesses along the waves. Here and there, at short distances, diminutive centres of fire floated like halcyons' nests upon the waters.

The fancy struck me that some bold jinneh of

the East had brought down a number of seed-stars from the firmament, and strewed them wantonly over the Mediterranean. During perhaps half an hour we proceeded through this mimic sky, after which we entered again into the dark waters, and beheld the brilliant isle of light drifting away from our stern, till, glimmering faintly and more faintly, it was at length lost in the distance.

Being in a state of strong excitement, I felt, for many hours, no inclination to sleep, though at length drowsiness came over me, upon which I crept into the cabin and joined the slumberers.

When I awoke, the sun had already risen, and we were approaching close to Sicily, whose bold coast, luminous with the morning's rays, threw out innumerable rocks and promontories into the waves. I love, in this way, to approach an island in the morning, especially in the warm south, where everything around you is bright and glowing as the sky. Presently our speronara dashed in between the piers, and, in a few minutes afterwards, I was ashore.

LIV.

On my way out, I travelled like a philosopher. with one carpet-bag, and nothing else whatever; I had now, by the purchase of curiosities and antiquities, multiplied my encumbrances to five, and had, consequently, five times as much annoyance

as before. However, I thought it would be much better to lose one or two of them than to make myself unhappy, so I trusted to the honour of the Sicilians, and desired two or three ragged urchins I saw about the pier to take possession of my property, and carry it after me.

A very fine young woman, of about eighteen, took up one of the heaviest of the packages, and was bearing it along, when, not thinking this a proper occupation for her sex, I said she had better give it to one of the young men, who stood there in great numbers, lounging about. She replied, with great simplicity, that she could carry it as well as any one of them. "Look at my arms," said she, baring them almost to the shoulder. "Do you think I have no strength? or is it that you object to paying money to a woman?"

I smiled, and replied that I had no such objection, and that, if she thought proper, she might carry the whole of my packages, either altogether or one after the other, just as she pleased. Her answer was, that she had no desire for monopoly, and wanted nothing but fair play; after which, barefoot and barelegged, with a green box on her shoulder, filled with shells, Oriental agates, and carnelian from the Libyan desert, she trotted off gaily towards the town.

At parting, I made her share double that of the youths and boys; but this not according with her ideas of justice, she immediately divided the

surplus between them, keeping only a fair proportion for herself.

"If the King of the two Sicilies," said I to her, "were half as just as you are, your country would be prosperous and happy."

"Signor," replied she, "he would be just if he lived among us, and knew how much pleasure it gives one."

She then smiled, repeated her thanks, and bounded away with her companions, to chat, and laugh, and lounge about the pier, till some fresh employment offered itself.

LV.

The chief authority of Girgente, I forget his designation, happened just then to be sick of a fever, which, according to the good folks of the place, had been caused by the malaria then prevalent all along the coast. I should have felt extremely surprised had it been otherwise; for in no quarter of Cairo or Alexandria, even where a dozen dead camels lay decomposing in the sun, did I ever inhale a more fœtid atmosphere than in this wretched little town.

To express their high appreciation of the power of disagreeable odours, the ancients fabled that the mephitic vapours of Avernus struck down the very birds which attempted to fly over it. The standing pools, kennels, dunghills, and other varieties of

filth that lay steaming and sweltering in the sun throughout the precincts of Girgente, scarcely, perhaps, possessed this miraculous force; but I sincerely believe that any stranger who should attempt to exist in the lower town, during many days in the month of June, would soon be hurried to his eternal account, with all his imperfections on his head.

Coming from the East, the proper domicile of plague and pestilence, we fancied ourselves perfectly case-hardened, and marched towards the house of the sick functionary with as little ceremony as you would have entered the rose-gardens of Er Rashid; but we had not properly calculated our powers of nose. My friend, the merchant, turned sick, and retreated to a patch of shadow in the court-yard.

One among the more hardy of my companions entered the house with me, but stopped short on the first landing-place: while I, in the hope of getting our passports put in order, penetrated, at the heels of a servant, into a sick room, where the poor man, who appeared to be dying, directed me to repair to his deputy, saying kindly, he was much too ill to attend to business.

Here the fœtid vapour was almost as strong as in the Grotto del Cane at Naples. In the course of a few seconds my brain began to reel, and had I not retreated very speedily I must have dropped on the floor. The windows were kept close shut; and if the man really died, as I suspect, he may be truly said to have been stifled to death.

If, however, there was much to smell, there was nothing to see in the lower town of Girgente; so as soon as we could procure mules we left it to mount towards the upper city, where the great colonists of old Greece reared their dwellings, erected mighty structures in honour of the gods, and earned for themselves a degree of glory which must be co-lasting with the annals of the human race.

LVI.

With little Selina on the saddle before me, I turned my mule's nose in the right direction, and began to ascend the hill; how my friend the half-horse felt, is more than I can say; but at every step upwards my breast seemed to dilate as I inhaled the pure air from the mountains, breathing around us as if it contained health enough for all the world.

At every little platform on the way I paused, and turned round to enjoy the prospect behind, much to Selina's discomfort, since, being ferociously hungry, she would have thought it lost time to look after the finest landscape in the world. Perhaps she was right. To a person in her condition —and my own, I suspect, was pretty nearly the same—there is no landscape like a cheerful breakfast-table, on which the loaves represent mountains, delicious slices of roast fowl and ham the fat and smiling plains, and the milked coffee those refresh-

ing fountains which delight the traveller in the desert.

The readers of Plato's Book of Laws will remember that exquisite passage in which, with unrivalled art and eloquence, the philosopher describes the old Athenian and his Cretan friend ascending the acclivity of Olympos. Here and there in the road the taste of classical Crete had erected marble summer-houses, adorned with numerous statues of rural gods, furnished with pleasant seats, above with antique trees, and commagnificent prospects over hills, dales, alleys, down to the sandy beach and nean.

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Here and there on the road-side, arose thickets of the aloes-plant, thirty feet in height, from which the colossal snowy blossoms had but recently fallen.

LVII.

While the ascent was steep we toiled up slowly and with difficulty; but arriving presently at a sort of table-land, the mules seemed determined to put their best foot foremost, and went clattering away like the very devil towards the modern Acragas, which the lumbering genius of the Romans converted into Agrigentum. The Sicilians, innkeepers and all, display a fine taste: I beg to except the gentlemen who have located themselves among the stagnant pools at the foot of the hill.

The inn to which we betook ourselves was exquisitely situated upon a narrow esplanade, with a woody ravine on both sides, and a lofty precipitous point; along the summit of this tongue of land extended the garden, filled with odoriferous shrubs, turned into arbours and bowers furnished with soft seats, where, if one had nothing better to do, one might chat and smoke to all eternity.

Selina and I took our station beneath some sweet-smelling trees on the very edge of the precipice while breakfast was getting ready. I was already

tolerably tired of all my companions but her and her father, who just at that moment was deeply engaged in directing the cooking operations. Soon a pretty waiting-maid came tripping down the gravel path, with the welcome intelligence that breakfast was on the table; upon which Selina, seizing her by the hand, bounded away joyously with her towards the house.

We now, like the devils in Milton, determined to repose our wearied virtue for a few hours, and to regale ourselves with coffee, fresh bread and butter, eggs, fruit, and Sicilian wine of the most delicious flavour. Wiser people might have immediately run out to see the temples, and visit the virtuosi; but we had our own way of enjoying ourselves, and preferred a little wine and smoke, just then, to all the temples in Sicily.

Don't let the reader who has a respect for antiquity imagine that I am myself indifferent on the subject; quite the contrary. I have a strong partiality for the Greeks; but there is a time, as Solomon expresses it, for everything under the sun: a time to review ruins, and a time to remain at home; a time to eat breakfast, and a time to smoke; understanding which thoroughly, we determined *carpere diem*, as the Romans used to phrase it, or, in other words, to enjoy our cigar while we could.

LVIII.

I have said that the waiting-maid was pretty. After breakfast, as I was again walking in the garden, she came to me and said there was a gentleman in the town, indeed, he was her father, who had a collection of antiquities, which he would be very happy to show me. It would not be at all necessary for me to buy, if I did not want anything; but he loved to oblige strangers by exhibiting to them his treasures. She then undid a ribbon from her waist, and, showing me at the end of it a cameo of rare beauty, said—

"My father gave me this on my last birthday. Is it not pretty? he has many more of the same sort, and I am sure you would like to examine them. Come, Signor," said she, "I will conduct you to his house, and let us take that sweet little girl along with us, my father will be so delighted to see her She is quite a little Turk, isn't she?"

Selina, who was close at hand, seemed to comprehend by the girl's looks and gestures that she was speaking of her. "She wants," said I, "to show us something pretty. Shall we go with her?"

"Oh, yes, do," exclaimed Selina. "I am not hungry now; and you can smoke, you know, as we go along."

We then proceeded with our conductor towards the house of the virtuoso.

LIX.

Some one, an Israelite, I believe, has written a book on the calamities of authors. He might have written a hundred; for among all the races that inhabit this planet, none is so unlucky or exposed to so many cross accidents as ours. Here now for instance am I, just arrived in Sicily, and desirous above all things to be exact. But what encounters me?—a dreadful gap of thirty-two pages in my journal.

Every one who possesses an imagination must know its tricks; how it exalts and magnifies what is lost, especially if the loss be irreparable. Mine delights to represent to me the beauties of those missing pages. They, at least, must have been good. A thousand and a thousand times, in the depth and stillness of night, when deep sleep falleth upon other men, have I gone back over the golden records of memory in search of those lost pages. I picture to myself the swarm of ideas which trusted to the durability of those sibylline leaves for their preservation from shipwreck amidst the jostlings and perils of time.

But perhaps in some moment of obliviousness, when the soul properly speaking was from home, I may have lighted my cigar with them, or else

Dorothy, finding them by accident within the fender, may have put them innocently between the bars. However this may be, all who have ever written, be it much or little, prose or verse, novel or sermon, will sympathise with me. What oceans of manuscript, have I not examined in search of them, what drawers, what cupboards, what desks, what impossible places! And yet all this while, they may be lying close at hand, in the capacious bosom of some ancient folio, out of which they will perhaps tumble, as some descendant of mine, anxious to know what his ancestor used to read, may be turning over the pages a hundred years hence.

LX.

In a confused and imperfect manner, the recollection comes back to me of what I said and saw, during my visit to the virtuoso. He was not an old man, but the habit of his mind, which kept him perpetually among ancient things, gave him the appearance of something more than old age. He seemed to have emerged alive from an Etruscan tomb, and to be coeval with the gems, vases, and paintings he exhibited.

I love antiquarians when their taste is genuine. Not for them does the press teem, or civilization produce its novelties. Without being conscious of it, they may be contemporary with the greatest

revolutions in society, just as people in London sleep calmly and quietly in their beds, while Vesuvius is vomiting forth oceans of molten lava; while Naples, with its whole Bay, is rocked by earthquakes, like a ship in a tempest, and every soul in the neighbourhood, terrified by the smoke and thunder, anticipates immediate death.

The companions of the antiquary are the men of the generations of old. He distinctly remembers Tarquinius Superbus, he has shaken hands with Alcibiades, he has strolled arm in arm through the agora with Iphicrates, he has taken many an evening walk with Lysias on the Long Wall, he has basked on the breezy summits of Hymettus at the peep of dawn, when the early damsels of Athens came forth with their classic pitchers to the fountain of Callirrhoe.

With such a man it is extremely pleasant in certain moods of mind to hold converse. But we of the present age in general seem fearful lest the fate of Lot's wife should overtake us if we look back. The things of the hour are enough for us. We invent, we bustle, we crow over our science, we boast of our art, and commiserate the people of old Hellas, when we deign to think of them at all, as poor wretched sinners, who never travelled on a railway or tasted turtle-soup, or read Southey's epics. Still, "after life's fitful fever they sleep well," and perhaps if one could but disquiet them to bring them up, the discovery we should make

would be that they preferred greatly the conditions of their own existence to ours.

LXI.

A whole volume, at once interesting and instructive, might be written on what I saw that morning in the rooms of the virtuoso; but nearly all my pages are bespoken by other topics. I can only find room to utter a few words of admiration and regret upon a Grecian vase contained among his treasures. It was adorned with a painting, of which no time will suffice to efface the traces from my memory. It represented a rich, sheltered, grassy glen among the woods, probably of Cythæon. Rocks rose on both sides, in pinnacles, from behind the trees; and, in the foreground, a gentle brook ran bubbling and flashing in the bright sunshine. Close upon its banks a maiden of surpassing beauty lay stretched upon the grass, obviously in the agonies of approaching death; her head supported by a man, with one hand, while the other was lifted in an attitude of entreaty towards heaven. But his bosom was torn by mixed emotions: words of intense love appeared to be pouring forth from his lips—words of sufficient power to stay the fleeting soul, and keep back for a moment the King of Hades. Many a woman would esteem herself happy to die in youth, could she but thus secure to her memory the entire

amount of devotion and attachment in her lover's breast. And it was this sentiment that the Grecian artist had obviously sought to portray. Celestial resignation, and an ineffable calm, rested on the maiden's countenance. A few transient pangs would, she felt, accomplish her apotheosis, and set her up for ever as a divinity in the soul of the man she loved. Death, in such circumstances, loses his sting. The mind, strong in its affections and its purity, overleaps the sufferings of the present moment by anticipating the coming joy. Art, in this case, had been just to woman's love, contemplated as noblest by the noblest minds, where it is regarded as the highest step leading to the empyrean. The nation may pride itself upon its greatness, and on the possession of a poetical existence. But where a corrupt and vitiated civilization has transmuted this feeling into a mere earthly passion, the race of glory, for those who thus think, may be said to be run, for all that was heroic in their natures has died out.

One little memorial of my worthy friend, the virtuoso, I brought away with me. It is a head of the Dardanian shepherd, who allured away Helen from Menelaus. The face, surmounted by the Phrygian bonnet, is superb in its effeminacy, and suggests at once ideas of impassioned grandeur and moral delinquency.

When we are absorbed by any one thought, we often lose sight not only of politeness, but of the

proper consideration due to others My admiration of the virtuoso's treasures had rendered me unmindful, as I returned towards the inn, that I was allowing his daughter all this while to remain in a state of mind extremely uncomfortable. As I said nothing, she took it into her head that I had been disappointed.

"Signor," said she, at length, "I fear my father's gems and vases have fallen very far short of your expectations. But it is my fault; I said too much about them, which I always do, because, as I love my father, I fancy whatever he possesses must be good."

I assured her she had misinterpreted my silence, which was occasioned by the excess, not the want of admiration. This she could well enough understand; and so we were both satisfied, especially as I made her a little present for acting as my guide.

LXII.

In another sort of work I might have described the cluster of ancient ruins which crowns the hills above Girgente. The temples almost look as if they had been only unroofed by some late storm, though upwards of twenty centuries have witnessed their dilapidation. I leave, however, to others this agreeable duty, merely observing, that I narrowly escaped being dashed to pieces down the vast precipice which skirts the shrine of Hera.

When among the relics of the arts of Greece, I often suspect myself to be no better than a Pagan. But in reality there is a sort of religion apart from creeds and dogmas, which allows us to sympathise even with the errors and mistakes of our race. The Greeks, as St. Paul objected to them, were by nature too religious, for δεισιδαιμονία is not superstition; and, therefore, wherever I find the remains of their shrines and sanctuaries, I do not so much think of Athena, or Artemis, or Aphrodite, or Poseidon, as of the Eternal Spirit, which implanted divine longings in their hearts; and then, if there be beauty anywhere on earth, it is in those spots which held the Greeks formerly, and still retain—in fragments, alas! too perishable,—mementos of their having lived there. I really do feel, and am not ashamed to confess it, in all such places, more perhaps than an antiquarian's delight, in walking about or sitting down and meditating amidst shattered columns and broken altars, to my imagination still redolent of incense. The time which separates me from those who burnt it there seems nothing. I listen attentively with my mind's ear to their hymns and dirges, and when I get up to come away, regret that I am stepping out of the circuit of a glorious vision into the dull and dreary arena of common life, to associate with the stunted subjects of Neapolitan Bomba or Bavarian Otho.

LXIII.

On consulting the oracles of Girgente respecting the character of the road, if road it might be called which road was none, leading across the island to Palermo, the response proved desperately unfavourable. Brigands and assassins, we were gravely assured, abounded everywhere as plentifully as blackberries,—though, as there was scarcely any travelling and still less trade, they must chiefly have amused themselves by murdering each other, having no one else to rob or kill. Under these circumstances, we resolved to adhere to our Eastern habits, and travel by night. Accordingly, a little before the witching hour, we left our inn, my companions mounted comfortably on sober mules, while to my share had fallen a black stallion, about sixteen hands high, full of fire and romance, and extremely proud, as I soon discovered, of his equine character, which made him, he was fully persuaded, much too good for the society of mules.

No sooner, therefore, had we bade adieu to our hostelry than off we started at a canter up the easy slope of the mountain. I knew, of course, no more about the way than Adam, but as the baker, to whom the horse belonged, who accompanied us in the capacity of guide, told me my sable friend had often performed the journey before, I took it for granted he must know all about the topography of

Sicily, so that it would have been extremely impertinent in me to dispute the point with him. Besides, it was now a long time since I had been on horseback, and the motion seemed so exhilarating, that I verily believe I forgot all about the object of my being on his back. I yielded to the seduction of the pleasure I experienced, and suffered him to bound along through the darkness, as Sancho's master might have allowed Rozinante in the solitudes of the Sierra Morena.

There is a mystery about our joys and sorrows, about our delights and pains. For example, it is always to me a source of extreme satisfaction to ride at night through mountain gorges, or forests, or along the sands on the sea-shore, gazing at the starlight, or listening to the breakers. Even a cab on the road to Edgeware or Finchley, awakens—provided it be very dark—a world of strange ideas and associations. Imagine, then, what I must have felt when ascending, on the back of a magnificent horse, the classical mountains above Acragas.

The track was intersected by deep ravines and gulleys, in some places clothed thickly with wood; in others overshadowed by rocks, among which I heard now and then the fall of waters. When we had sufficiently distanced the rest of the company, Orlando, for that was his Christian name, showed a disposition to take things easily, and slackened his pace. He knew perfectly well that I was in a meditative mood, and kindly resolved to

indulge me. We mounted and descended, we steered along the edge of precipices, we plunged into small woods, we turned promontories, we traversed dusky glades, till at length we emerged far aloft upon a beautiful table-land, where I induced Orlando to pause a while, that I might catch a glimpse of the sea, heaving and glimmering in the starlight below.

To oblige me, he became as still as the brazen horse out of which Gyges took the magic ring, so that I had ample time for enjoying the prospect at my ease. And what a prospect! Far in the orient, over the sea, I observed an appearance to which all the resources of human language will not enable me to do justice. The shepherds of Persia, from the pinnacles of the Elburg mountains, often witnessed the marvellous phenomenon which the Orientals denominate the "false dawn." This beautiful illusion seemed now to have followed me to Sicily, over the solitudes of Mesopotamia and the waves of the Mediterranean. On the edge of the horizon, a narrow band of pearly light, inexpressibly soft, stretched far towards the right and left. At first, not attending to the points of the compass, I took it for the skirts of an aurora borealis, streaming southwards from the meteoric regions of the Pole. But this belief could not be of long continuance. The light I saw was not variegated, but of a pure white, like the long veil of some denizen of Olympos, fluttering over her nuptial couch. Piles of thin

opalescent vapours, on which I should perhaps bestow the name of clouds, dotted the luminous ether, growing brighter every moment as the arch of light expanded in the east. The brilliance was that of a vestal. My heart fluttered as I gazed into the quiet heaven, and observed the mutation of its resplendence, as Artemis—for it was she—rose into the blue firmament, and silvered the tremulous waters with her chaste rays. God only knows why we experience such raptures as we do while gazing on the beauty of His works. There is, it seems to me, a holy reverence inspired by the aspect of the night, more especially when the rising moon climbs into her place amid innumerable planets and constellations. The soul, thrilling with joy, brimful of piety, seems to recognise in her the messenger of God, bringing two kinds of light to us—one by which we behold things visible, the other by which we discern internally the spiritual universe, with all the multiplied, chain-like relations which connect us with our heavenly Father. From all this, however, the reader will not be able to form to himself an idea of the landscape, replete with grandeur and magnificence, where it thus stretched away before me interminably towards the east. Girgente had dwindled into a little handful of fairy structures, cresting the brow of a beautiful hill, flanked on both sides by mountains, and overhanging a sea which now flashed and glittered, and exhibited every conceivable form of loveliness, beneath the magic

smile of the queen of heaven. I have beheld the moon rise in the desert, on the ocean, in Italy, and among the Alps; but anything comparable to this, for richness, poetry, and splendour, I have never witnessed. All around me lay a wilderness of mountain-peaks, some rocky and bare, others luxuriantly clothed with wood, and a labyrinth of valleys, small plains, and hollows, in some places flooded with silver light, in others wrapt in shadow, and constituting altogether a panorama such as it does the eye good to look upon.

LXIV.

I now turned Orlando's nose towards what yet remained to climb of the eminences, never once thinking of my companions, who, in their turn, I dare say, were equally oblivious of me. It was now the month of June, and the weather was as fine as the heart could wish. Yet an hour or two before dawn, I felt a chill in the atmosphere, which induced me, with Orlando's permission, to draw forth flint and steel and light a cigar. The smoke rendered me dreamy, and I proceeded in a state between sleeping and waking, till the dawn broke over the mountains.

I now began to think it would be best to suffer myself to be overtaken, and accordingly made a halt, to allow my friends to come up. I had to wait some hour or two at least, for as the phrase is,

the mules were slow and sure, and formed a drag upon Orlando's movements, who would have traversed half the island, while they were sweating and toiling over a small district. It is an extremely wise saying that "you can't eat your cake and have your cake." I had exhausted my capacity for pleasure during the night, and now, when the day was come to reveal to us the beauty of Sicily, I felt so oppressed with drowsiness that I could literally see nothing. I have no doubt Orlando was every whit as sleepy; so that, between us, the wonder is we did not tumble down into some bottomless pit, which yawned among the distant offshoots of Etna to engulph the slumbering and the unwary. But the Oreads, I suppose, took us under their especial keeping, and conducted us, by many a dangerous descent down into a deep valley, where all I can remember is the flashing of a broad stream amidst huge boulders, and at the foot of grey rocks, designed, no doubt, to be the seat of lazy shepherds and shepherdesses.

LXV.

At length, we arrived at an old mill where the murder of the Jew, described in "Margaret Ravenscroft," was perpetrated. If it had been the scene of fifty murders, it would have been all the same to us. With a ravenous appetite for sleep, letting our beasts find the way to the stable how they

could, we rushed to partake of the sweetest pleasure upon earth. I unrolled my Egyptian bed, and in a moment was lost in delicious oblivion. I mean oblivion of localities; for the imagination only appeared to become the more lively, in proportion as it escaped from material fetters. With a godlike power, it placed me in a moment among the Alps, whither weeks and weeks of toil would scarcely suffice to bear the soul's vehicle.

There is a charm in home, inexplicable upon all ordinary principles of philosophy. When the traveller is in buoyant health—when all things succeed according to his wishes—when he beholds new lands, and feels the intoxication of pure skies, the idea of it, the recollection it may be, flashes but seldom across his memory. But at the first touch of calamity, when smitten by sickness or overcome by fatigue, the image of home seems immediately to dilate, till it fills all the chambers of the soul. Then our thoughts recur, with irresistible force, to familiar things; then the picture of our fire-side rises up in unimaginable brightness before us; then our children climb our knees; then we lay our aching and throbbing head on the accustomed bosom, and find relief. I know not what may be the case with others, but when sick, or weary, or dejected in distant lands, I always dream of home. One may contrive to live anywhere, but by one's own choice, one would prefer to die at home. That, to all men, whether they confess

it or not, is the point on earth nearest heaven. There, if anywhere, they have been happy; and the touch of Death's fingers seems less cold when we are pillowed in the arms of those we love.

I said I dreamt of home in that strange, half-fabulous old mill in Sicily, which, for sleep, I could scarcely see when I entered it. On our arrival in Switzerland, we had taken up our residence at Vevay; and my almost daily amusement was, to walk out in the evening with my wife and children towards Chillon. How merry they all were scampering by Julie's bosquet at Clarens, or leaping over the tiny streams that came down, tumbling across the road from the Dent de Jamant. My imagination now pictured that scene vividly over again. There they all were, exactly like life, if we except the baby, whose face was hidden by a veil which I endeavoured, in vain, to lift. It would not come off, though I seemed thoroughly conscious that the little mischievous imp was laughing heartily under it. Tears were dropping, though not from my eyes, upon the veil, which, by degrees, they rendered transparent; so that I could distinctly perceive my baby's beauty. Suddenly it began to fade, and the whole group, and the castle, and the lake, and the Alps above Meillerie, and the very sky, grew dim. There was a strange rushing sound in my ears. I awoke, and was saluted by the hissing of a frying-pan, in which some rashers and eggs were preparing for breakfast.

LXVI.

I had been many hours asleep, for the sun which, when I lay down, threw its shadows westward, now cast them in the opposite direction, and at great length too. Still we called it breakfast, for we had, as yet, eaten nothing that day.

At the risk of being thought a gourmand, I must venture a word or two on that meal. The reader will not forget that we had a Jew among us, but he was one of those who had no objection to bacon, or, at all events, had none on the occasion in question. And when it was served up in thin crackling slices, with delicate new eggs, fresh butter, abundance of cream, and bread like that of Venice, it would have required supernatural powers of self-denial to resist the savour of the unclean beast.

Our whole party were as merry as Greeks: sleep had so thoroughly revived us, that we seemed all to have been boiled in Æson's caldron, or to have just issued, spick and span new, from the mint of nature. Jokes are capital things, but like fish, they won't keep; their flavour is good for nothing unless they are fresh. For this reason, I shall not repeat what we said at breakfast, though at the time, we thought it very good, and prided ourselves very much upon our wit. Our host and hostess, with many members of their family, had joined us, and appeared thoroughly inclined to

share our coffee and our merriment. The patriarch himself seemed to have been a descendant of the pigmies, and would have proved but a sorry morsel for a stout crane, who might have gobbled him up, breeches, coat, and all, but for the huge brass buttons, with which the latter was decorated. Each of them looked like a Lilliputian shield; and indeed, with skill, a good fencer might easily have protected his vitals with it from the point of an adversary.

LXVII.

My belief is, that if a man could be conveyed abroad in his sleep, and then awakened, he would know he was in a distant country, by the very smell of the air. Nothing in physical nature differs more from any other thing, than the atmosphere of one region from that of another. We have one kind of air in England, another in France, another in Switzerland, another in Italy, another in Greece, another in Egypt, and another again in Sicily. Hippocrates thought, and many philosophers have since agreed with him, that it is this difference in the ethereal fluid we breathe, that makes nations differ so much as they do from each other.

Montesquieu is famous for having adopted and advocated this theory, at which many persons laugh perhaps for want of knowing better. For it seems not unreasonable to suppose, that our bodies

steeped through thousands of years in so all-pervading an element as the air, may at length be so influenced by it, as, in the finer portions of their organization, through which external nature acts upon the mind, to acquire qualities analogous in some respects to its condition. It is at least possible in this way to account for the peculiarities of numerous races scarcely explicable on any other hypothesis.

Be this as it may, I felt as I sat in the old mill, that I was breathing a buoyant atmosphere, impregnated with all rare qualities; my animal spirits were in a ferment, and my ideas flitted about like a swarm of bees, alighting occasionally here and there, but much too volatile to remain long anywhere. All the fables invented by the lazy Greeks of heroic times, came crowding pell-mell upon my memory: Hamadryades with their forests, Naiades with their secluded fountains, and marine goddesses, tripping lightly by moonlight, before the advancing waves, on some golden beach. Sicily was famous of old for its delicious honey, and more delicious legends; and I now felt all the inclination in the world to give them credence, as histories of things which might have been, if they had not. Why should we perversely baulk our fancy, when it is disposed to make us happy? The heart believes in fables all our life long, and indeed without this consolation, we should in all likelihood quickly call upon Atropos and her sisters to cut it short.

The reader has no doubt often heard of a bottle of smoke, and I much fear he will think me no better; so frequently do I recur to that exquisite intoxication produced by the Virginian weed, or the more ethereal produce of Mount Lebanon. Should such be the case it cannot be helped. All my companions were of the same kidney, and so invariably after meals, we began to fumigate our apartments, as though we had entertained strong apprehensions that the plague might be lurking in them. No necromancer was ever more devout in consuming magical drugs, to allure into his circle the shades of the dead. On the present occasion, the sense of weariness, rendered delicious by intervening repose, awakened in us a strange appetite for a cigar. Our whole frames thrilled with that inexplicable feeling which people experience after a long journey, when they have been almost dead beat, but are so no longer.

Too lazy to move, we had a chafing dish brought and placed in the midst of us, and there lounging on our beds, which served very well instead of divans, we enveloped ourselves in fragrant clouds, like so many associates of Jove on the summit of Olympos. Nor was our luxury confined to the gratification of a single sense. Wines, the richest in Sicily, were brought forth, and as in rustic goblets they foamed and mantled before us, we laughed and chatted like so many citizens of Sybaris, intent on making the most of this world.

This we did till dinner, which was served up

with the close of day. In England, jolly fellows bawl over their cups, that they won't go home till morning. For our parts, we had no home to go to; but we very devoutly vowed not to leave the old mill till midnight. After dinner, therefore, smoking was renewed together with conversation, in the midst of which my friend the merchant glided, I know not how, into the following story.

LXVIII.

"I was once travelling," he said, "on the plains of the Hauran, the ancient Decapolis of Syria, a region once so completely deserted, that not a single family could be found in it for hundreds of square miles. Nowhere, perhaps, on the surface of this globe could you discover a more complete picture of desolation. At wide intervals the ruins of the ten cities towered into the air, amid scattered palm groves, in which was heard no voice; but at night, instead, the growl of the hyæna, or the wild, prolonged howl of the jackal. Still, thousands of houses, built and roofed with stone, stand intermingled with ruins on various parts of the plain, as fit for the habitation of man as on the day they were erected. In some chambers, perhaps, a little dust has been accumulated by the winds; otherwise, except that there is no furniture, you might imagine that the inmates had just stepped out to visit a neighbour, and would return presently.

"I was coming from Bir, on the Euphrates, and I

had already passed through four of the ruined cities, and was towards evening approaching the fifth, when I beheld several columns of smoke ascending from the ruins, and diffusing themselves into the pure atmosphere. Far in the west the sky was reddened by the setting sun, which threw a warm glow over the earth, kindling everything, and investing it with the hue of burnished copper. The very palm-trees, as they stood—so many pictures of repose in the motionless air—seemed ruddy with light. Here and there the voice of the grasshopper was heard mingling with the song of the nightingale, which in Syria seems richer and louder than anywhere else in the East.

"Our camels, though tired by the day's journey, now quickened their pace, allured forward by the smell of water, to catch a glimpse of which they reared their long serpentine necks, and gazed around in vain. In them the sense of smell is still keener than that of sight. Incited by thirst and the hope of slaking it, they rapidly moved their cushion-like feet, and soon brought us to the portal of the caravanserai, where a mild, majestic old man in Arab costume, advanced to meet us.

"Having exchanged the salutation of peace we entered the grand court of the building, in the centre of which we alighted and piled up our baggage. A little further on, the waters of a cool fountain shot up like spray into the air, and fell back splashing into a marble basin, ready for the

use of men or camels. All around between ranges of antique columns, were open chambers, where hundreds of travellers might have reposed themselves, and stowed away their goods. Along the roof ran a terrace, in front of another range of apartments, in one of which we took up our abode for the night, while our coffee was prepared and our cabobs broiled close at hand in the open air.

"The keeper of the caravanserai, a person of remarkable aspect, attended to us carefully and seemed eager to provide for all our wants. Upon his brow sat extraordinary serenity, and his large mild eyes seemed to inspire a feeling of quietness and security in all whom he regarded. There was besides I know not what of fascination in the man, whose whole gait, bearing, voice, and conversation, appeared to belong to a superior order of beings. On the things of this earth he set no value, all he coveted was the love of God and the love of men, and that he still lingered upon the earth was only to be accounted for by the wish to serve and benefit his fellow-creatures to the last. The spirit of a seraph seemed to have passed into his frame, and his supreme joy would have been to kindle the lamp of contentment on ten thousand hearths, and to behold the eye of the widow and the fatherless running over for joy. No doubt such men are rare, but they nevertheless are found in the world, though they be in it, not of it.

LXIX.

" After our evening meal, when my attendants had retired to rest, I besought him to relate to me his story, and how he came to be in that place, and why it was, as he appeared a lonely man, he was still so alive to the sympathies of humanity, and the love of all the creatures of God.

" ' Thanks to the Compassionate, the Merciful,' he replied, ' I am not alone. Many hearths are bright in this caravanserai, and in several dwellings around it. Prosperity has long rested on my head, but as to the way in which I came to be found here, listen and I will relate it:—

" ' Many years ago, when I was in the flower of my youth, I dwelt far away in the mountains of Lebanon, among a people who worship God after a manner peculiar to themselves. It is their belief that a large portion of the divinity dwells in women,—the mothers and consolers of mankind; and for this reason they offer a sort of limited adoration to every member of that sex. On this account, and for some other reasons not easy to be explained, they enjoy a larger share of happiness than any other tribe. They mix not with their neighbours, they hold little intercourse with strangers, though nothing among them is more sacred than the privileges of hospitality.

" ' When a traveller from a distance reaches their

mountains, he is entertained without charge, and with the salutation of peace dismissed on his way. But their faith and opinions are their own, and these, beyond what I have already stated, they never divulge to strangers.

"'When, as I have said, I was in the flower of my youth, I had a dream. It was far in the night, and sleep had descended like a cloud on all our dwellings: a spirit in the form of woman came to me, and said, 'Arise, O Hassan, and journey eastwards, and thou shalt come to a deserted city, and thou shalt enter into house after house, and shalt seek until thou hast found my image, and then thou shalt set up thy abode there and be happy.'

"'At these words I awoke, and upon a low square pillar, at the further end of the room, I beheld a beautiful form, naked, but enveloped with light. It shone like a star, and illuminated the apartment, smiling sweetly upon me, and pointing with its finger eastward. It then vanished, and the room was filled with darkness, and I felt as if a portion of my soul had departed. So I arose in the morning and related my dream, and my parents gave me their blessing, and saddled for me an ass, and put provisions upon it, and kissed me, and bade me go in peace according to the will of God.

"'There is, as you know, a condition of mind in which the earth seems carpeted with velvet, and every breeze breathes perfume, and stars and sun

shed a golden light, and the heart runs over with joy and contentment. As I descended the slopes of Lebanon, and approached the plains where my brilliant vision was to be realized, this was exactly the state of my feelings. My provisions, however, at length began to be exhausted, and the thought more than once presented itself that I might be acting imprudently, and that what I had mistaken for a vision, was a mere dream without significance. Still, something like a divine impulse seemed to urge me forward. When hunger came over me, I sat down at the foot of a palm-tree, and picked up the dates which had been shaken down by the wind, and ate them, and blessed God who had thus provided food for me in the wilderness. My beast also browzed upon the grass, and we drank morning and evening at the same springs, and were refreshed.

LXX.

"'Still weariness is not entirely to be guarded against: night had overtaken me in the midst of a plain, where there was neither tree nor ruin, neither was there any stream or fountain to be found. Nevertheless, I dismounted from my ass and said within myself I would pass the night there; for a cloud had come over my mind and I was sad. The beast that had supported me thus far, now drooped, and seemed to look at me reproach-

fully because there was neither grass nor water, nor any place to repose on but the heaps of shifting sand.

"'A dimness came over the face of heaven, and the stars twinkled less brightly, and instead of music there seemed to be a funeral wail in the night breeze. I sat down dejectedly on the sand, and my ass stood beside me hanging his ears and looking melancholy. Yet I soon fell asleep, and immediately the spirit came to me in form and aspect as before, and smiled and bade me be of good cheer, for that my journey was drawing to a close. This vision seemed to be prolonged throughout the night, and when I awoke in the morning the space around me appeared to be hung with gorgeous tapestry that faded as I gazed upon it.

"'My ass was browzing at a little distance upon a thistle, and the red light of dawn was covering, like a woman's blushes, the whole face of the east. 'Verily,' thought I in my heart, 'the earth is most beautiful!'

"'Sleep had refreshed me, and I had not travelled far ere I came to a date-palm growing beside a spring of water. The ground was thickly strewn with ripe fruit, and I prayed and made my ablutions and ate, and resumed my journey.

"'Towards the close of the same day I caught a glimpse of this ruined city, and felt I was approaching my home. The evening sun's sloping

rays rested upon it, gilding each wall and roof and spreading over all the variegated mantle of light. However, ere I had entered it, the soft twilight had faded away, and the moon, with inexpressible serenity came walking with white feet across the desert, shedding from her countenance a peculiar lustre upon everything. Battlement and tower, and half-ruined arch and portico and doorway, gleamed and smiled as though they had been the dwelling-places of happy spirits.

"'I passed the threshold of a house taking in my ass along with me. A quantity of dates remained from what I had picked up in the morning, and having collected a little dry wood, I kindled a fire and spread my cloak upon the ground and fell asleep; not however before I had plucked a little grass for my beast, whom I now regarded in the light of a friend.

"'With the morning's dawn I began my search through the edifice for the image of her who had appeared to me in sleep, but in vain. The chambers were empty, and though strange imagery adorned the walls, no figure of the unearthly form I loved was visible among them. I therefore departed from it and entered another structure, which, in the course of the day, I swept clean with palm branches. Before night I caught a gazelle in a spring and killed it for my sustenance, and laying by a little for the morrow, fell once more asleep.

"'Again no vision came, and next day a troop of horsemen from the desert made its appearance in the ruins, and one of these bestowed on me a blanket and a little bread. My ass now grazed on the fertile plain in the neighbourhood of the city, and I became a hunter, and with comparatively little toil provided myself with food.

"'But days and weeks passed by, and still, though I never slept twice in the same dwelling, the figure of the goddess could not be found, and I began to be sorrowful, and said within myself,—I will continue to make this trial during one hundred days, and if at the end of that term I am still the companion of disappointment, I will return to my father's house and think no more of the delusion by which I have been led astray.

LXXI.

"'Frequently during my term of probation the Bedouins of the wilderness came to me, and always finding me in a new habitation, said within themselves, "This man is mad. We indeed are constrained to remove from place to place, and pitch our tents on new spots, but want of fertility is the cause of our wanderings, and not the impatience of familiar things." They, however, knew not the cause of my seeming fickleness, nor could I prevail with myself to reveal it to them.

"'By degrees, indeed, and as the period of the

hundred days drew towards a close, shame began to overwhelm me, so that it was with much reluctance I recurred to the motives which had brought me thither. My nights became wakeful. I listened to the jackals, and the owls, and the rushing by of the wild horse, and the scream of the night eagle.

"'Once, as I sat at the door of my house, a strange appearance presented itself on the verge of the distant desert. There had been a dead calm for many days; there was a sultry feeling in the air, and the sky assumed a menacing aspect. As night fell in, long streaks of flame, red, blue, and saffron, played close along the earth. Upon the sand, which shortly afterwards was put in motion by a strong sudden wind from the south, clouds sufficiently vast to overwhelm an army surged upwards into the sky, hiding the moon and stars, and making my heart sick with terror. I retreated to my chamber, and said, There is no strength or power but in God, and abandoned myself to grief and tears. In spite of my terror, I inwardly rejoiced that on the morrow I should be free from the obligation of my vow; since the cycle of a hundred days would then be completed, when I would return to my father's house, and express sorrow for what had happened, and apply myself during the remainder of my days to the task of doing good, without thinking any more of her who had disturbed my brain, and made me a wanderer and an exile.

"'After this I slept, and, arising in the morning, I looked around me in vain for my faithful beast, the companion of my travels, and I said to myself, It has gone forth to browse on the plain; I will hasten in search of it, and we will depart together. And I searched over the whole plain, and among the ruins, and found it not; so, as I loved the animal, I was fain to remain one other night, persuading myself it must surely return in the morning.

"'As evening drew near, the breeze seemed to be laden with fragrance from the mountains of Haduamut, or the groves of Oman. Birds of delicate plumage, and rich and varied notes, alighted on the ruins, and filled the air with sweet music. In my own mind there was a calm inexpressible, a contentment bordering upon rapture. I walked into one of the edifices, which had the appearance of a temple, and said—"I will pitch my tent here." And I took dates and placed them on a stone, and sweet water in a gourd, and I kindled a fire and sat down, and was very happy. I saw nothing, yet seemed to feel the presence of some one.

"'At length I fell asleep, and was absorbed in delicious visions till morning. To my slumbering fancy, the figure of her whom I had loved stood, as in my first dream, on a pedestal at the extremity of the apartment, and smiling on me, bade me arise to receive my destined bride. The strong effort of my fancy aroused me at this moment, and I awoke. Day was streaming in through rents in the ruined

wall, and, strange to say, there stood the figure, but white and motionless as marble. As this seemed to be but a prolongation of my dream, I rose not from my couch, but lay gazing in bewildered rapture on the apparition. Near me lay my ass, asleep. The hum of life among the busy insects without, the waving of palm-trees, and, above all, the bright sun's rays, shedding glory around, convinced me at length that I was awake.

"'Accordingly I arose, and advanced towards the statue. At first fear restrained me from drawing too near; but I gradually approached the pedestal, and touched the limbs of the figure. Was it the illusion of my imagination, or were they really warm? In another moment the image stood beside me on the earth. It was a woman; but to this hour I have never discovered the secret of her birth and parentage, of how she came to the ruins, or why she loved me. This ignorance, however, does not diminish my happiness. I am the father of many children. My own family have emigrated hither from Lebanon; and this evening as you drew near, you must have beheld the smoke of their fires ascending into the pure heaven. The Bedouins of the neighbouring desert are my friends. I have cultivated fields and gardens, filled with the most delicious fruits, in exchange for which they bring us all we need.

"Here he paused, having concluded his narrative; but I remained dissatisfied, and he perceived it.

Aware, nevertheless, of the manners of the Orientals, I continued silent, musing on his curious narrative. Had he been a Muslim my evident wish would have been disregarded or have roused his anger; but educated in the principles of the Kadmousians, he was tolerant on the subject of women. Bidding me, therefore, arise and follow him, he led the way to an apartment in the caravanserai, where I beheld a woman nearly about his own age surrounded by a group of daughters. They were seated and did not rise on my entrance, but bowed, and like the Muslims, placed the right hand on the breast. Coffee was then brought up, not by slaves, servitude being hateful to the Kadmousians, but by two or three of the younger members. A very lively conversation ensued, and it was already late ere I retired. Next morning I took leave of my agreeable host, whom I have ever since regarded as one of the happiest and most fortunate of men."

LXXV.

Though we were not actually lulled to sleep by the merchant's story, which we might have been but for his merry looks and gestures, it was some time before we could dissipate our strong propensity to drowsiness. Allat, the Aphrodite of the Arabs, appeared to us an extremely good-natured goddess, but sadly deficient in ingenuity

and provokingly slow in the fulfilment of her promises. Goddesses, however, like their prototypes on earth, are sometimes capricious. What they give they will bestow in their own way, and, remembering it is not politic to look a gift horse in the mouth, we must fain be content.

LXXIII.

Exactly at the witching hour of night, we started forth from the half-ruined mill, and bestriding our beasts, as Hassan did his ass, pushed forward under the guidance of our tutelar genius, the baker. I have not much faith in the theory of presentiments, except where physical causes, as was now the case, will suffice to account for them. The air, completely charged with electricity, was extremely sultry and depressing, and occasioned a disagreeable languor both in man and beast. The mules seemed to be more than ever smitten by the delights of the "*dolce far niente*," and even my black stallion, usually so frisky and impetuous, threw back his ears, held down his head, and, by the sluggishness of his movement, gave me clearly to understand he would much rather be sleeping quietly in the stable.

On, however, we went. Our way lay up the steep acclivity of a mountain range altogether bare of wood, but sprinkled here and there with vast boulders and misshapen fragments of rock. In

natural world, blazing for a moment with refulgent light, and then retreating into the annihilation of utter darkness. Every second they emerged and receded, as the pulsations of the lightning shook the cloudy firmament and burst from its entrails with terrific groans.

What were the feelings of my companions I know not, but though in some sense awe-stricken, I never experienced more strongly a sympathy with the powers of nature. I seemed for the moment to be elevated above the sphere of mortality, and to be admitted into the society of supernatural intelligences, to whom our fancy may appropriate stupendous mansions in the clouds, or halls beneath the pavilion of night. But the empire of such thoughts is not of long continuance. I began to feel extremely cold, not having a dry thread upon my back, while the wind which had risen with the rain seemed to send the moisture into my very bones. We tried to shelter ourselves beneath our beasts, but the rain-drifts came beating under their flanks, and soon convinced us there was nothing to be done but to brave it out.

By degrees the clouds began to grow tired of inundating the backbone of Sicily, and the miserable little group of travellers who stood there, helpless and shivering, amid the pelting of the pitiless storm. Happening to stand with my face towards the east, I saw through a sharp rent in the clouds a single star, sparkling and flashing in the deep

blue sky, like a mighty diamond freshly polished and washed with dew. I now shouted to my companions that the war of the elements was over, and that we might presently be again in motion. In fact we now began to talk and encourage our poor trembling animals, who stood much in need of a few cheering words.

LXXIV.

Just as we were about to remount, the modest moon made her appearance, filling all heaven with her Thetis-like beauty, and vindicating to herself the Homeric epithet of the silver-footed queen. By day I am told you can discover from the pinnacle on which we stood the blue Mediterranean on both sides of the island, and some of my long-sighted companions fancied—but I think it could have been only fancy—they saw its multitudinous waves rolling and flashing beneath the trembling light. The range of my vision is more limited; I could, however, see enough to fill my heart with pleasure, for from the rocky coronet of Sicily nothing, far or near, was visible which did not put on a magic splendour beneath the moon.

As in human nature no lull is so deep as tha which follows the tempest of the passions, so it is with our mother earth, who always after a storm seems to fall asleep, and her slumbers never appear

so tranquil as then. The very infant at its mother' breast looks not more innocent or gentle.

The interval till dawn was passed in comparative silence. For myself, I rode a little ahead with the baker, who scorned the aid of horse or mule, and, like Martinus Scriblerus, made his own legs his compasses.

He related to me as we moved along, numerous stories and anecdotes which I cannot now pause to repeat. My refined readers may despise me, if they please, for my taste, when I confess that the gossip of this honest Sicilian had far more charms for me than that of any educated person I encountered in the island. He was what in unclassical phrase we denominate a right good fellow, or, more technically still, "a brick!" Of all knowledge of literature he was innocent. Neither Greeks nor Romans had aided in storing his mind; but still that beneficent nurse and teacher, Nature, had been merciful to him, and given him a soul every way qualified to enjoy her beauty. As we went along I was perpetually struck by the originality and boldness of his expressions, which Thucydides himself, had he been addicted to topography, would not have disdained to employ.

"See," he exclaimed, "how the moon darts her light like arrows into the flanks of the retreating storm!"

My readers must have been very often amused by the contests I carry on with language when the

nature of the subject requires one to be picturesque. On the present occasion, I wish he would take the pen out of my hand and try what he himself can do with the dawn of a summer's day in Sicily. I am, I protest, beyond measure puzzled. If Hadrian ascended Mount Etna for the purpose of beholding the sunrise from its summit, I envy him that pleasure almost as much as any he enjoyed during his reign. I did not behold the opening of the day-springs from on high at so great an elevation above the level of the sea; but it must indeed be divine if it could surpass in glory and beauty the sight I myself enjoyed from the backbone of Sicily.

The pavilions of the East, as based on air they rose flaming in the distance, were enveloped with a brightness which seemed to be an intermingling of all colours. Neither saffron, nor gold, nor porphyry, would express the tints of brilliance which radiated from Aurora's bed. It is almost enough to render the soul immortal to behold such a dawn. All the images of the poets, all that the fancy of Claude or Poussin could fling upon the glowing canvas, will not enable the northern reader to form a conception of the spectacle. Whatever is grand and beautiful in nature seemed to be concentrated in that division of space, which looked for all the world like the material realization of the classic Olympos—the throne, and home, and dwelling of the gods. Around us, every eminence

in the island wore a golden or a purple blush, while the valleys and depressions were mantled with wild shadows. At such a moment I should, perhaps, have preferred to be alone; but if I must have a companion, my baker from Agrigentum was the man, for like the shepherd in the Iliad, he "eyed the blue vault and blessed the useful light."

LXXV.

The revolutions of society, however great or remarkable, are at least equalled by those which take place in the feelings of individuals. When I first set down my ideas of Sicily I found it difficult so far to discipline my animal spirits as to hinder them from running away with me. Events have since occurred more than sufficiently powerful to bridle their impetuosity. Calamity brings down that Enceladus, our imagination, to the dust, and heaps an Etna of sad and depressing thoughts upon it which checks for ever its Titanian propensity to scale the heavens. Beneath this load it heaves and tosses in restless captivity, longing earnestly to escape and walk upright once more in the free and buoyant air. But in vain. The soul once deprived of its wings recovers them in this world no more, but must wait patiently for its deliverance to the hour which shall strike off its fetters of clay and open for it a way to the stars.

Having ridden all day, we arrived as evening

came on at a little dreamy village, situated in a lofty valley among the mountains. There was no room for us in the inn, the landlord of which got us entertained at his brother's house, a comfortable roomy building, which the mistress of it kept scrupulously clean.

While dinner, or rather supper, was getting ready, I stood leaning on my elbows at a low window, looking out upon a meadow terminating in a little grove. Its foliage, extremely fresh and green, was now enveloped in a misty golden light by the rays of the declining sun, while soft breezes played over the tall grass which rose and fell in gentle undulations like an English cornfield in autumn. Every person has peculiar associations, and for myself, I have none more pleasant than those connected with the rustling of the winds through leaves or grass, which gives a voice to the woods and fields, and enables them to hold a sort of converse with us. Nature, in pity of our transitory state, seems, at such moments, to bewail our fleeting existence. On her Time makes no permanent impression. The spring of the year is as young and fresh as that which ushered in the creation; the leaves of to-day are as green as those of Eden; and the airs that breathe murmuring over the meadows of the south, are as richly scented as those which were fanned by the wings of seraphim. But man grows old in the midst of Nature's youth—wrinkles come upon him even

while gazing on her unwrinkled countenance, and her illimitable length of days only seems to render still briefer, by contrast, his own fleeting existence.

LXXVI.

A little before nightfall I lighted my cigar, and leaned upon a half-door looking into the street. All the villagers had come out to enjoy the evening, and were moving to and fro, men and women in pairs, looking the very picture of contentment. There was a great deal of talking and smiling, but no loud laughter or noisy jests: the very boys seemed hushed into a sort of pleasant repose, and carried on their harmless amusements without brawling or contention. Several of the young women of whom I caught glimpses as they passed, were extremely pretty, with large dark eyes and a profusion of raven hair descending in masses over their shoulders. But it was the aspect of the whole that charmed me. The street was wide, but instead of being paved or pitched with stones, it consisted simply of the rich brown earth beaten hard by the foot. Neither piles of dust, however, nor refuse of vegetables, nor any other unsightly thing met the eye. All was cleanliness, and the sweet air breathed among the houses, in themselves neat and comfortable, as if pleased to associate with man. In the happiest days of ancient

Sicily, when it was beautified by Hellenic colonies and Hellenic arts, when poets of a high order graced its cities, when Pindar sang the triumphs of its Olympian victors, it could scarcely, within the whole of its wide circumference, have presented to the eye of the stranger a lovelier or a happier village.

LXXVII.

Though almost as fond of sleep as a wild cat, I took into my head on this occasion to dispense with it, and instead of retiring to rest with my companions, went out a little after dusk to explore the neighbourhood. How still and beautiful everything then appeared! There was no moon, but the stars shone so brilliantly that they might almost be said to supply her place. All the poetry of Theocritus seemed to be poured into the atmosphere, which as I walked along, came against me, gently kissing my cheeks as a mother kisses an infant in the cradle. Close to the inn, a green lane, over-canopied by odoriferous trees, led up the steep slope of a hill. Into this I struck, and after walking for some time at a very easy pace, emerged upon the summit of a conical eminence overlooking the village and the whole surrounding country. It was evidently by day a place of great resort, for all the grass around a seat beneath a spreading tree was nearly worn away.

I sat down to enjoy the landscape and the hour. Sicily lay before me like a beauty in deep sleep, when the act of breathing is performed so silently that she might almost be mistaken for a statue. The infinite vault of heaven, which, as Juliet expresses it, was thick inlaid with patterns of bright gold, rested on all sides upon the quiet earth, infusing, I could not doubt, ecstatic visions into thousands. Here and there, in the foreground and in the distance, lights twinkled between groves and copses, but these were the only signs that the neighbourhood was inhabited. Neither the barking of dogs, nor the bleating of sheep, nor the lowing of cattle, nor the sound of wheels, could be heard anywhere. Silence had wrapped everything in her mantle, and the earth presented to my mind a faithful picture of the unbroken repose of heaven.

LXXVIII.

Some hours before dawn, we resumed our journey in order to reach Palermo early in the afternoon. During the whole day nothing occurred worthy of notice, except that when the sun was at its highest, we came in sight of the Æolian sea, dotted with volcanic isles, stretching like an enormous mirror towards the unseen shores of Italy. As we descended the mountains, the country seemed almost at every step to put on

fresh beauty: thickets of flowering shrubs, copses of organic emerald, tufted groves here and there, assuming the dimensions almost of woods; valleys of Idalian loveliness, villas, castles, churches; villages, towns, convents, hamlets, arose one after another in the glowing sunshine. Paradise itself appeared to be unrolled before the eye, until at length we entered upon the matchless environs of Palermo, which no words in my humble vocabulary will suffice to delineate. No spot on the surface of the globe seems to have been better fitted by nature to be the abode of romance and poetry. What Venice was to Byron, Palermo is to me,—the *beau ideal* of cities, peopled with unfading reminiscences, replete with associations, and deserving to be, what it is, a sort of acropolis of the imagination. I shall however enlarge on the topic no more; what I have to say of the place, I have said in "Isis," in the story of the Countess Santa Rosalia. My stay was protracted, for we had many visits to make, and there was much to see: the Monte Pellegrino, the cemetery with its English tombs; the churches, the palaces, the picture-galleries. But these things let others chronicle. I have no calling that way, and shall therefore, without further ceremony, resume my rambling narrative, and make the best of my way towards Parthenope.

PART THE FIFTH.

"Wherefore all night long shine these? For whom
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"

"Oh me, no more, no, never more on me
The softness of the heart shall fall like dew."

DON JUAN.

"As we draw near home
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming—and look brighter when we come."

BYRON.

PART THE FIFTH.

I.

I DO not know why I should have an affection for Palermo, more than for any other city. My stay there was not much longer than in Naples, or Leghorn, or Genoa; I left no dear friends behind me, and in fact had never known any there—still, though I quitted it with alacrity, I experienced some regret. The place, the site, the neighbourhood, are in truth very beautiful, and summer had then done its best for the situation.

The earth came down, clothed with emerald, to the edge of the blue sea, that lay like an infinite flashing mirror between us and Italy, which we knew to be in the distance. And there was another thing in the distance, which though unseen, also had attractions infinitely more powerful,—my own hearth on the Leman Lake, with whatever renders a man's hearth sacred, that twinkled like a star in the firmament across the sea. Alps and plains appeared to be annihilated by the strong yearning I felt to put them aside, and stand once more in the midst

of my wife and children, as I had stood, I could scarcely tell how long before,—for time seemed to be extended by absence indefinitely.

When I stepped on the deck of the steamer, I imagined myself, in some sort, in England. She had been built there, her engines were English, and everything about her seemed redolent of the old country, England! I know not why I love it, except that I was born there, that the ashes of my forefathers lie scattered over it, some on the field of Naseby, some on Marston Moor, where they shed their blood gallantly for the Commonwealth. But now I bethink me, there are other things also which attach me to England. Most of my children were born there, and to a father the birthplace of a child is like the birthplace of a star, sacred and beloved for ever: London, Devonshire, Burgundy, Normandy, have all been endeared to me in this way. There an intellectual light was kindled upon my hearth, which will burn on brightly, I trust, long after my eyes shall be no longer open to see it. Infinitely numerous, however, are the ties which bind one to one's country: early studies, the remembrance of father and mother, the associations of youth, the aspirations, the schemes of manhood.

On the deck of the steamer were many Englishmen and many foreigners; among the latter there was a good deal of leave-taking, embracing, and kissing, by which they were distinguished from our

countrymen. The Englishman is not without deep emotions, but his pride overshadows and conceals them. He stands upon the earth as if he did not belong to it, and as if everything worth emotion were elsewhere. Yet he feels and burns within, and has the passion of fifty foreigners compressed in his apparently cold heart. I had one countryman, a merchant, who came to take leave of me. I had not known him many weeks, but the grasp which he gave my hand at parting, and the full deep voice in which he pronounced the words, "God bless you," reconciled me to the manners of the old country, which, say what we will, have something primitive and grand in them.

There was another merchant on board, who had come by land from Messina, to take his passage by the steamer to Marseilles. He was about thirty-two years of age, spoke Italian better than English, and had not been in London since he was seventeen. Of the other passengers, some were my companions from Egypt, others entire strangers—French, Armenians, Russians, Neapolitans.

Standing alone, near the companion, was a man with a huge brown paper parcel under his arm, rather shabbily dressed, and looking, as it appeared to me, in some sort forlorn. Scarcely any one spoke to him, as I fancied, on account of his poverty. All my sympathies were, therefore, awakened at once. I made up to him. This he seemed to regard as a kindness, and entered heartily

into conversation with me, partly on our fellow-passengers, partly on politics, and the state of Italy.

I soon found him to be a man of refined feelings and poetical mind. We stood together, admiring the beauty of Sicily as it receded from us. There is an infinite charm in a maritime country, especially in the south. How exquisitely do the shores rise out of the sea, with their woodland heights, their bays, their promontories, their coves, and nooks, and valleys! I fancy I still behold that bright Sicilian coast as it went away, fluctuating eastwards, along the blue Mediterranean, till it faded into a mass of cerulean haze, hanging like a cloud upon the sea.

II.

In the course of the morning, we saw far in the distance the Æolian Isles, rising like sharp pyramids out of the water, and delicately relieved against the soft sky. I would have given much to hear the thunder of Stromboli, and to have beheld its red lava pouring by night into the waves. But it was now bright day, and the sunshine, descending in floods upon sea and land, dimmed all terrestrial fires, and would have made Etna itself look like a farthing candle in its splendour. The things of earth are large when contemplated by themselves; but when you view them as part of the mighty universe, filled to overflowing with the power of God, they dwindle away, and seem next to nothing.

No matter how magnificent the framework may be, the pictures represented by the transient scenes of life are often sufficiently humble.

We had along with us an old gentleman from Spain—not a Spaniard, however, but a Scotchman, who had travelled much in Castile, and Arragon, and Granada, and Andalusia. He was accompanied by a young wife, who, however, had not weaned him from the love of wine, on which he descanted with much eloquence and learning. I won a high place in his esteem by being able to discourse with him a little on this subject, more, I must confess, from reading than experience; but this his enthusiasm would not allow him to detect. We became by degrees so erudite, as almost to frighten away the rest of our companions, and talked of the Anthosmias, and the Chian, and the Lesbian, and the Cretan, and the ruby draughts of Tenedos, and Zeus knows what besides. But he was persuaded, perhaps with justice, that the wines of the modern world surpass in fragrance and flavour those of classic times. I begged, however, out of respect for Plato, Alcibiades, and Socrates, to retain my preference for the wines of old Greece, which, I fancied, must have a finer aroma, on account of the superiority of the men by whom they were produced. Besides, when the gods themselves came down from Olympos to share with mortals the juice of the grape, would they have contented themselves with inferior wines? On the contrary, I am per-

suaded Jupiter must have been a great connoisseur, to say nothing of Bacchus, who stood at the head of the profession, and no doubt inspired his vintagers with the art of preparing the finest nectar for the human race.

III.

Our ancient Scotchman, in his Dionysiac wanderings through Spain, once got entangled in a little adventure which had very nearly closed his accounts with the Spanish wine-growers. Notwithstanding all his prudent efforts to reach some town before nightfall, he was overtaken by darkness on a wild moor, in the kingdom of Leon. Like a true son of the North, he looked upon all Spanish postilions and outriders as little better than cut-throats, or, to say the best of them, as arrant cowards. His pretty little wife, who stood near as he related the story, was at the time with him in the carriage. The night was cloudy and dark, and the wind whistled drearily across the waste. A large bag of gold, which under other circumstances might have been a source of satisfaction, now only rendered him the more uneasy. There it lay, with its offensive attractions, jingling, glittering, and tempting providence, as the phrase is. Our worthy Caledonian, somewhat given to uxoriousness, having no great confidence in his own judgment, consulted his wife, and between

them they contrived a plan, which, in case they should be attacked by robbers, would, they hoped, enable them to preserve at least some portion of their property.

Taking the gold pieces, they dropped them one by one into the hollow of the carriage-door, intended to receive the sash; and in this way five hundred were disposed of before the expected brigands made their appearance. Immediately afterwards, however, the horses were stopped, and a whole cohort of picturesque rogues, in black sheepskin cloaks and huge sombreros, swarmed about the vehicle. While the rest swore and gesticulated frantically without, two of their number forced open the doors, and entered, lantern in hand, in search of booty. One of these presented a pistol, another a dagger to their breasts, observing, with a sort of mock politeness, that they should be under the disagreeable necessity of killing them, unless, without delay, they delivered up their cash. The travellers had wisely retained well-filled purses about their persons; but these did not quite satisfy their visitors, who unceremoniously searched their pockets, took away their gold chains and watches; and when they had turned up the cushions, pricked the carriage-linings with their daggers, and uttered a sufficient quantity of imprecations, they consigned the heretical Englishman and his partner to the devil, and left them free to proceed, if they pleased, in that direction.

The coachman now began to whip the horses, the postilions used their spurs, and the out-riders dashed along with ostentatious gallantry. Meanwhile, no doubt whatever could be entertained that they had pocketed a share of the booty. They, of course, had agreed with the banditti on what precise spot they would contrive to be benighted. Less than an hour brought them to the town which, but for the necessity of obliging their friends, they might have reached long before the curfew. Here our North Briton, tasted, as far as he was able, the sweets of revenge, for calling together all his attendants in the inn-yard, he dismissed them with such anathemas as his knowledge of Spanish enabled him to employ, and next day started with a fresh set, probably of superior ethics, since he reached Madrid without any further inroads being made upon his bags.

IV.

Milton talks of compelling our language to search her coffers round, in order to supply a proper clothing for his ideas. In itself, no doubt, our mother tongue is rich enough; but when one has occasion for a magnificent vocabulary, many of the finest expressions appear to hide themselves so as never to be found when they are wanted. This everybody must own is to the last degree provoking. If you look into Shakspeare, you observe our old, quaint, crabbed, northern dialect assume at once,

the port and majesty of Æschylean phraseology, glow with glorious imagery, and emit a brightness from its surface which dazzles like polished steel. But when one desires to go and do likewise, the syllables limp and halt, and become obstinate, and refuse to marshal themselves at your bidding in the proper order. You have, perhaps, some idea of Titanian proportions, which you wish to imprism in words, but can find none big enough. Yet the subtle essences of thought are like Milton's Pandemonian chiefs, and can dilate into colossal proportions or shrink into dwarfs, according to the size of the dialectic mould into which, when fused, you pour them.

This I intend as an apology for any shortcomings that may be observable in my attempt to describe daybreak on the waters. I have some fancies with which the reader may or may not sympathise, as it happens: I am never weary of trying to describe four things—the beauty of infancy, the beauty of womanhood, the beauty of lightning, and the beauty of the dawn. In these very different phenomena, seems to me to be concentrated more than half the charms of the world. When I have done my best, however, I feel that I ought to content myself with the enjoyment of my own admiration, because I have a sort of quarrel with language, which evidently never will help me to express all I feel.

Never had the sea been hushed and quieted into

so absolute a repose as that which it enjoyed during our passage from Palermo. Our Maltese steward, who went backwards and forwards over it, perpetually, tried to convey an idea of this in a particular way.

"If you were to fill that tumbler with ink," said he, pointing to one which stood empty before me, "and were to place it on this table-cloth, not a single drop would be spilt in a whole day."

Such was the placid beauty of the sea, when, about an hour before dawn, I went up on deck to enjoy the cool breeze and watch for the coming morning. The stars and constellations were clustering, twinkling, and flashing thick overhead. No one was stirring but the few sailors whose duties required them to be there, and these not being quite awake, were as silent as the steamer's tackling. I had the whole universe, therefore, to myself, and for the moment it seemed to belong exclusively to me. If there be a spark of devotion, religion, or piety in a man's nature, it must come out at such times: you muse, you gaze, you inhale the air, which seems, as it were, alive with God. Your heart within you thrills to its lowest depths, and gratitude for existence bubbles restlessly up as from unfathomable springs. Without knowing why or wherefore, you find yourself pronouncing a blessing upon God, as you look with unutterable love at his creation. That is the moment for the pure triumphs of religion: you do not think of

yourself; but are content to be absolutely nothing beyond a passive recipient of the thoughts inspired by Divine power. Almost might you then be said to be a holy being, for you sympathise with whatever is holy or great in the universe.

V.

I looked towards the mountains of Calabria, but, as yet, they were slumbering beneath the stars, and showed nothing but their clear outline as they lay stretched in majesty from north to south. I knew, however, that the rosy-fingered dawn was behind them, travelling rapidly over the vast plains of Asia, and calling up millions of Muslims and Pagans to pronounce their morning prayer to the Almighty. Nor would she pass over, without awakening them, the lions, the tigers, and the elephants, that they might roam in their primitive forests, and receive, from Infinite bounty, the sustenance allotted to them. I knew, I say, that Eos was coming, in all her celestial beauty, and waited patiently for her appearance. The imagination of epic poetry, placing itself beyond the *flammantia mœnia mundi*, talks of the splendour of our system, shooting far into the bosom of dim night a glimmering dawn. The appearance I now witnessed, scarcely answered to that: the mind became conscious, as it were, of the approach of light before the eye could detect it; the stars began to pale their

ineffectual fires; the avant-couriers from the East were almost invisibly mounting the zenith; and night's empire was assailed and subverted, as it were, without a struggle. Over the Calabrian mountains, a streak of faint light, for a moment or two, played like a meteor, the undulations of their crests imparting to it a varied and irregular aspect. The stars now seemed suddenly to have retired into the infinite depths of space, and the power that eclipsed them appeared like the love of God, blotting out every inferior idol from the human heart. The dawn every moment increased in grandeur; a thousand beautiful phenomena crowded round the goddess, as she emerged from the womb of the East. Presently, she rose above the mountains in the magnificence of her full-grown loveliness, and the whole earth, glittering and glowing with an infinite variety of colours, seemed, as she lay panting in the new light, to reflect all the majesty and beauty of heaven. The sea was still, serene—and wha serenity! The mythologists of old Hellas must have gazed upon it in such a mood, when they fabled Aphrodite to have been born from its bosom. That, I am sure, was the very anniversary of her birthday; and from Idalia, and Paphos, and Cythera, she had sent forth all her voluptuous witchery, to augment the beauty of her parent sea. Presently, the sun came to dispel the phenomena of a protracted dawn, and to light us into Naples, towards which our steamer glided, as if by magic; its

paddles playing gently with the waters, and its iron funnel sending back into the clear atmosphere a long fluttering stream of vapour, like a white ribband, diffused and melting at the extremity into the air.

VI.

As the civilization of the world advances, poetry, according to many, dies out. The reason commonly assigned is, that we know too much for the Muses. We represent them to ourselves as conjurors and practisers of sleight-of-hand, and when we have found out the truth, persuade ourselves that their occupation's gone. But this I look upon as a mistake. The real cause of the death of poetry is the selfish effeminacy which invariably grows up among a rich and luxurious population. This renders us averse from powerful emotions; and as each person cultivates the growing taste, every exhibition of deep feeling is assailed with ridicule.

Society, in such a state of mind, is too nervous and delicate to yield to strong excitement; the process would make it ill, and therefore it husbands its forces and reserves them, to be expended in mere physical enjoyment, in balls, routs, soirées, dinner-parties, and other grand developments of the social system.

Again, to all things familiar, and of every-day occurrence, we attach the idea of vulgarity, which prevents our seeing them in their true light. For

example, steamers and railways are exiled by common consent from the domains of Parnassus; yet few things in reality are more sublime than a steam-train, putting itself into spontaneous motion, and flying along at the speed of a hurricane, through valleys, and over plains, and plunging, as if by magic, into the very bowels of mountains,—roaring, vomiting forth fire and smoke, and appearing to annihilate space and time as it goes. Through rain, through snow, through darkness, it shoots along the surface of the earth, a moving town, with more than a town's population sitting behind the engine, in warm and comfortable chambers, at their ease, with a world of thought and speculation in every brain: some depressed by sorrow, some buoyed up by hope; young mothers with infants at their breasts; aged men, who approach at once the terminus of the railway and of life. If we could tear off the husk of ordinary associations, such a train would appear to us a poetical prodigy, scarcely less prolific of grand suggestions than the flying horses of the Arabian Nights. Then pass to the steamer—see it lie quietly in harbour, but bound, perhaps, for America or the Indies. The appointed hour arrives, the human will comes on board, and steam, obedient to thatwill, sets physical powers in motion which, in spite of waves and adverse tempests, put forth to sea in the teeth of everything, and guided by an unknown spirit, imprisoned in a little box in the cabin, pointing

unerringly in the right direction, it glides over fathomless and shoreless oceans, and at the appointed hour arrives, as if by some fixed agency of nature, at Calcutta, New York, Rio Janeiro or Hong Kong. Add to these the electric telegraph, by which, if so disposed, friends at a distance may talk to each other in spite of interposing seas and mountains. But it is unnecessary to make a catalogue of the wonderful things around us, which need not, at any rate, interfere with the operations of poetry, though their existence, contemporaneously with the non-existence of much poetic faculty, may, at least, be said to show, that the Muses in reality, are independent of external things, and know of no Helicon but the soul.

VII.

Capri! the scene of one of my day dreams—for I had once projected removing thither with all my family—was now in sight. It is really an Alp, set down, as it were by mistake, in the midst of the sea. All around, the cliffs shoot up from the waves, and tower to a great height, leaving at the top a succession of hills, and valleys, and delicious table-lands, fanned by refreshing breezes, illuminated by glowing sunshine, and spanned over for ever by an arch of amethyst. In whatever other respects Tiberius may have given proof of

bad taste, it was not in selecting the summit of this glorious rock to be the nest of his old age. How he actually spent his time there, history reddens as she relates. But from his sea-girt citadel, he might have looked down upon the turmoils, and guided, like an Olympian divinity, the complicated interests of the Roman world. In some sort, he really did so. His mandates flew from the Spintrian caves to the eternal city, and diverging from that centre of glory and ambition, radiated over the surface of the earth to Caledonia, Bætica, and the Euphrates. The Roman eagles and the Roman legions accompanied them, and the strength which had been created by the Republic, served, under this intellectual tyrant, to rivet the chains of mankind.

As I stood gazing at this island, longing to round it and catch a glimpse of Naples, a French nobleman, with whom I had conversed but little on the preceding day, came up and offered me a cigar. In politics we were the antipodes of each other, for he was a Carlist of the most exclusive school. Yet this did not hinder my liking him, though he was besides a bigoted Catholic. In gentlemanly feelings and ideas, however, he seemed a sort of Don Quixote, courteous in the highest degree: gentle, unassuming, inclined to put the best construction upon everything, unless where his religion or his loyalty was at stake. His mind at this moment was occupied by one overpowering thought, about which he seemed desirous to be

communicative. He said he had been enjoying a six weeks' tour in Sicily, and was now longing to see his wife, whom he had left behind at Castel-a-mare. He said she was, when he married her, the most beautiful woman in France,—a blonde from Alsace, with large blue eyes, and rich, light-brown hair. He had been ambassador at Munich, and now that the star of the old monarchy had set, lived in sullen retirement, amusing himself as well as he could with prophesying all sorts of disasters to the new order of things. Some French princess, whose name I forget, lived in the same palace with him and his family; and altogether, he said, they formed a charming little society, into which scarcely any Neapolitans were ever admitted.

"We are all French," he observed; "and if you will come and spend a fortnight with us, you will, I am sure, be very happy; for my wife, besides being as beautiful as an angel, thinks and converses like one also. You shall see her. As soon as the steamer arrives at Naples, she will come out to meet me in a boat, and even after this short absence, I shall regard her as the distressed mariner views the star which lights him to his home."

This domestic enthusiasm, which is perhaps more common than we imagine among the French, prejudiced me in favour of the honest Carlist, who monopolized me during the better part of the morning. Probably I was the only person who would listen with interest to his praises of his wife, which I doubted not she fully deserved.

VIII.

Presently the steamer turned the point of Capri, and threw open before me at once all the beauty of Naples and its matchless bay. From Sorrento, round to Pozzuoli, and Miseno, a sweep of thirty miles, nothing was visible but one uninterrupted range of magnificence, in which Nature seemed to outdo herself. The slightest possible breeze had sprung up, and the bay was all alive and quivering in the golden light. It looked like an infinite network of silver arrows, glancing and twinkling on those numberless smiles which the genius of Æschylus spread over the Hellenic ocean. Here and there the green woods, emerging, as it were, out of the sea, climbed the acclivities of the mountains, where they terminated in waving peaks. Anon you behold a valley, verdant and glossy, spring up among the folds of these southern Appenines, and leading the eye, heaven knows where, till it was arrested by the blue of the firmament. On innumerable sites, picturesque beyond the conception of fancy, arose palaces, and convents, and villages, and towns, and castles, glittering and sparkling in the morning beams, and conducting the eye gradually towards the queen of cities, where she lay in all her imperial pride, at the extremity of her own bay. A little to the right towered Vesuvius, clothed with vineyards and verdure, almost to the summit, from which at that moment issued voluminous white vapours, curled into long wreaths by

the wind, and stretching like a stripe of snow over the cerulean sky, in all parts else pure and unstained by a cloud. On the left were Ischia, and Procida, and Baia, and indications of the Avernian Lake.

As the steamer advanced, it placed us every moment in fresh points of view, and the scenes, changing, shifting, mingling, separating,—here bright with green, there sprinkled with dwellings,—everywhere invested with all the sunny freshness of the morning, and enveloped, as it were, in the azure mantle of heaven, imparted to me a pleasure which I cannot even pretend to describe.

IX.

Your lazzaroni are the people to put an end suddenly to poetical musings. As we drew near the city, boats innumerable came forth to meet us, so that we might, if we had pleased, have hired a dozen a piece. They would, in fact, have accommodated a whole fleet; and now my French friend was on the rack: he glanced his eye along the multitude of boats, filled with brawny, sunburnt vagabonds, who were abusing and damning each other, to the great edification of all who heard them. Women, of course, were mixed up in every group, and by no means the least liberal of their lungs, pushing, scrambling, fighting to come first on deck, and get possession of the passengers and their luggage.

Through this heaving mass of Neapolitan vitality the Frenchman looked in vain for his wife. His countenance began to grow very blank, and he turned away from me to hide his chagrin: at length, however, he exclaimed,—

"Ah! there she is; come, let me show her to you."

In a few minutes she was on the deck by our side, and truly, a more elegant or handsome woman I have seldom seen. When introduced, she joined her husband in pressing me to visit their château; but I had other thoughts and other feelings, and in a few moments I lost sight of them, and—shall I confess it?—without the slightest regret. Bustle, noise, excitement, absorbed me completely! Besides, I had to look after my property, which from a single carpet-bag had grown to five boxes, baskets, and trunks, filled with curiosities from the East. Short, however, as my attention to Madame La Baronne had been, it had sufficed to relieve me from all difficulties about my luggage. A host of thievish lazzaroni had seized upon the various articles, and left me without an ounce of baggage on the steamer's deck. I am not much of a philosopher, and therefore looked rather foolish when thus divested in a moment of all my relics from the land of Isis,—with those shirts, coats, trowsers, all of which I should stand in need of ere I reached home! However, there was now no help for it, and consigning the

whole population of Naples to the devil, which under the circumstances was the least I felt inclined to do for them, I descended sulkily into the first boat that presented itself.

My friends had all been more provident, and stood around me each watching like a vulture over his own treasures, while I appeared to be a gentleman at large, without anything in this world to care for. Here was I, therefore, very much like the man who fell among the *chevaliers d'industrie*, near Jericho, except that hitherto my skin remained whole: however, the parallel for aught I knew might soon be rendered complete, and so I approached the quay in a most diabolical humour. Not an atom of admiration for the picturesque was now left in me: I cared no more for the bay of Naples, or for Naples itself, than for a stagnant pool or a lazar-house. My heart was full of spleen, and if I had spoken at all, it would have been to give vent to no gentle words.

I might have spared myself all this paroxysm of ill-temper, for on emerging upon the quay I saw five lazzaroni in a circle waiting for me, with every atom of my baggage under their care. How they had found out the articles belonging to me, I could never learn; but there at all events they were, like so many ticketed porters, inquiring to what hotel my honour would choose to transport itself. Following in the wake of my Egyptian friends, I selected an establishment looking out

upon the bay, where I could indulge in my recovered taste for the beauties of nature.

X.

When a man is landed in a strange city, he is often puzzled, I fancy, what to do first. Leaving my companions to seek their amusement each in his own way, I repaired to the studio. It is not, however, my intention to describe the objects of art I beheld that afternoon; or, if I make an exception, let it be in favour of Aphrodite, for there, in twelve reduplications, the goddess loves in stone, and fills the air around with beauty. The Neapolitan conservatori, who are considerate people, have given this daughter of Zeus an apartment to herself. My tastes, no doubt, are peculiar; but I would certainly have preferred those varied representations of the Idalian queen, to Vesuvius with all his vines. Not, perhaps, for the mere amount of beauty embodied in the marble, but for that mighty world of associations called up in succession by each celestial shape. I remained here for some time alone. There was absolute stillness. The afternoon's sun came glowing in through long classic windows, and fell lovingly upon face or bosom, kindling it for a moment with life.

I imagined myself in one of the halls of Olympos, or in that other dwelling of the gods, the Acropolis of Athens, when the old democracy was in its glory,

and when no foot of Spartan or Persian had profaned the sacred rock. Each statue appeared to me to conceal, deep in its inner organization, a spark of conscious divinity; I could not regard it as mere stone. The genius that had lived around it seemed also to have penetrated it, and to have inspired it for ever with a soul. It asks no great stretch of poetical faith to believe this, or that the spirit of beauty which hung enamoured over Greece, had breathed upon these, its own images, and conferred upon them something like life.

XI.

After a while I returned to the gallery, and there sat down by the dying Amazon. I know not who has celebrated this statue, and who has not. I only know that as I gazed I was transported in thought to some Hellenic dell, to which the wounded beauty had retired to die. She is represented sitting on the ground supporting herself languidly with her left hand, the other is pressed upon her bosom, in the endeavour to stanch the blood which wells forth abundantly. The languor of death is on all her limbs; her beautiful eyes are closing to the world, her head droops, and her matchless form seems to shudder in the agonies of dissolution. Still vitality throughout her frame maintains a struggle with the king of terrors, but obviously an unequal one, for the marble collapses,

and you see clearly the contest cannot be of long continuance. Fancy completed the picture, calling up the woods and rocks, and the youthful warriors compassionating, too late, the fatal wound they had inflicted.

While I sat admiring this exquisite production, I felt a gentle tap on the shoulder, and turning round, saw my old friend, Doctor Oriel, who held out his hand to me. He had come down once more to the South, probably with the conviction that he should lay his bones there; I might almost, perhaps, say, with the desire, since whatever might be his associations with other countries, the home of his imagination was here. He had a presentiment, moreover, which did not deceive him, that he should never again traverse the Alps, but be gathered to his fathers amid the crumbling monuments of Roman grandeur, which all the studies and aspirations of his life had strongly endeared to him.

"This dying Amazon," he observed, "always reminds me, I know not why, of Baily's Eve at the Fountain. That is a work conceived in the true spirit of antiquity. The mother of mankind, sitting on the young earth in the most graceful and becoming manner, bends forward to contemplate her own beauty in the placid waters. She herself formed the culminating point of creation, the embodiment of the perfect idea of loveliness, which can have no fitter habitation than the form of

woman. But in Eve there was likewise the perfect beauty of the soul. The limpid mirror in which she saw herself reflected, was not purer than her mind, nor did the spangled heavens above her contain a fairer or brighter thing. This, it is clear, was the conviction of the artist, who has united in the figure as much richness and development as is consistent with virginity, and as much majesty and grandeur of countenance as can be joined with that tenderness in which consists the crowning excellence of womanhood. I saw this statue accidentally when on a visit to the artist's birthplace. It has been set up in a room apart, but in such a room! Here, in Naples, it would have formed the termination of this long vista of statues, and a concentration of glowing light would have been poured upon it by the skill of the architect. In the North, sir, we are still barbarous as regards the arts."

Much more to the same purpose did my friend Oriel deliver as we went along the streets on quitting the studio.

XII.

Next day, my unsocial fit still continuing, I rode alone in an open carriage, towards the promontory of Miseno. The spirit of Dr. Oriel had, I suppose, come upon me, for I found myself rummaging in my mind for scraps of Greek and Latin connected with the celebrated names which still linger about this shore. If the reader be inclined to call me a pedant,

he is welcome; I shall willingly plead guilty to the soft impeachment—for to be honest, one must confess. But no schoolboy ever recalled with more rapture the traces of his classical reading, than I did on that occasion. The poetry of the old world has produced a singular effect upon me, and given me some idea of eternity—a *parte ante* as the philosophers express it. All past time then appeared to be thrown open to me; through their assistance, I wandered back without difficulty to the very extremity of the mythological age, and watched the various fables, as they emerged one by one from the prolific womb of Greek genius.

When all those traditions and legends were credited, what a halo of sunshine and poetry must have encircled those parts of the earth! Every fountain, every rock, every tree, had its guardian genius, which wept, and bled, and died, with the object of its love. Those were the days for poetry; and to those days the poetical soul returns, as it were, to slake its thirst at unfathomable springs. Since then, nearly all spirituality has vanished out of the earth, which has been found by geologists to be a mere accumulation of quartz and sandstone of primitive, secondary, and tertiary formations, and Dr. Lyell knows what besides. I am as ignorant of these matters as an Homeric Greek, though I have a certain pleasure in listening to the buzz of science around me. But if I desired to make a nation great and happy, I would constrain it to

bestow its chief attention on moral studies; and most of all, on poetry. It is bad economy to starve the imagination. Like Boniface, the innkeeper, who ate his ale, drank his ale, and slept upon his ale, we may all eat and drink, and sleep upon the productions of the muses—the true manna of the soul, which nourishes and sustains it, and prepares it for rising with religion to greater heights.

XIII.

As the sun rolled his golden disc towards the west, he lighted up a scene which, by heavens! even he might have paused to gaze at. Pindar, in his description of the Elysian fields, fell far short of the reality before me. On my right, were the Campanian hills, glowing with the double splendour of antiquity and the sun,—the former, the brighter by far to me. On the left, the bay was converted into one vast sheet of crimson and gold, rippling, quivering, covered here and there with fleeting coruscations, which subdued or deepened the rich colours that painted its entire surface. And then the mountains beyond, what endless varieties of tints did they not exhibit! They were far off, but the transparency of the atmosphere seemed to bring them near. The day had been very hot, but now the coolest zephyrs came deliciously from the west, to fan my face, and enhance the feeling of ecstacy that thrilled through my entire frame.

Before me, the Mediterranean—heaving, flashing and tremulous with light—stretched away interminably, undotted by a single sail. Above, the vault of heaven, of the finest sapphire, towered in unclouded altitude, carrying the eye upwards through the rays of Helios, to the very threshold of the stars. Involuntarily, to calm my rapture, the saying of one of the monks of Camaldoli presented itself to my mind. A French traveller, of somewhat poetical temperament, having descanted one day on the beauties of this very scene, to the worthy father, closed his observations with the words—"This, in short, is a real paradise."

"Oui, Monsieur," replied the monk, "pour ceux qui passent."

XIV.

The saying of this friar, puts me in mind of a Spanish legend which, I trust, has never been in print before. If it has, I shall consider the next page of my book entirely lost, and must beg ten thousand pardons of the reader for treating him to a twice-told tale. Let me hope, however, for better fortune. An old gentleman, who had lived much in Castile, and visited besides, nearly all the kingdoms and colonies of the monarchy, related it to me formerly, with infinite grace, and a very liberal sprinkling of Spanish phrases.

"In the early ages of Christianity," he said, "there lived in a cave, somewhere about the sources of the Manzanares, an extremely old hermit. His piety was great, his charity extensive, and his love of Spain predominant over all other feelings. Youths and maidens in love; young mothers desirous of offspring; worldlings oppressed by debts and difficulties; religious men and women struggling with their sins, repaired constantly to consult the holy man, who sent them in turn all away, refreshed and comforted.

"A little time before his death, one of the angels who foresaw he was soon to be their companion, descended, through impatience, to converse with him a little beforehand, or else commissioned to bestow on him a blessing. The saint had probably been used to such visitants, and therefore experienced little or no surprise when, with his large white wings, he entered into his cave. On the contrary, he politely saluted him, desired him to be seated on a smooth ledge of rock, close beside himself, and then courteously inquired to what circumstance he owed the honour of this visit.

"'I am come,' replied the angel, 'to bestow on you a blessing.'

"'If I have found favour in your eyes,' said the holy man, 'let not your blessing be for me, but for my country. Heaven has already given me more than I can desire. I have had a long and happy life, I have closed the eyes of my parents amid abun-

dant blessings, I have beheld my sisters and my brothers grow up in honesty and integrity and I have had, besides, the inestimable satisfaction of augmenting the happiness of thousands. Let me now, therefore, obtain for those whom I never could reach, or aid, or comfort, the blessing which my Lord is pleased to offer me.'

"'I consent,' answered the angel, 'to bestow on your country not one, but many blessings. Choose for her, and be not bashful, for I know not where I shall stop.'

"'Then,' observed the saint, 'I ask for a fair climate.'

"'It is granted.'

"'I ask for magnificent mountains.'

"'You shall have them.'

"'Next, for fertile plains and noble rivers.'

"'They are yours.'

"'Then for beautiful women and brave men to inhabit this glorious land.'

"'I accede to your wishes.'

"'Then for excellent fruits and rich harvests, and oil and wine, and whatever else the comforts of life may need.'

"'I concede all you demand.'

"'Last of all,' said the hermit, 'I pray you to ensure us good government to complete and form the crown of the blessings you have lavished on Spain.'

"The angel rose in haste, if not in anger:—

"'You ask too much, friend,' said he, 'all the rest you shall have and welcome; but good government—oh, no—that is never to be granted to Spain, while kings are your idols, and palaces your temples.'

"So saying, he extended his wings, darted out of the cave, and in a moment was lost in the blue depths of space."

XV.

There was of old a nation in Africa which, like the devil in Milton, never addressed a speech to the sun but to tell him how it hated his beams. I am sadly afraid lest the reader should come by degrees to suspect me to be descended from these blasphemers of light, so often do I dilate upon the pleasures of darkness. However this may be, on returning this evening from Miseno, I enjoyed a prospect which never could have been equalled by day. Looking towards the maiden city, I beheld it before me, rising tier above tier, "where many a row of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed with naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light as from a sky." On the right, the cone of Vesuvius, dusky without, was evidently flaming within, for it threw up a ruddy glow into the atmosphere, which made my heart beat with the hope of witnessing an eruption; but the light was neither augmented nor diminished, nor was there earthquake or thunder: my eye returned, therefore, to the works of man,

and dwelt with delight on the innumerable points of that illumination which glowed and twinkled around the skirts of the volcano.

All great capitals appear to be idealized by the night, which strips them of whatever is vulgar in their aspect, and envelops them in the gorgeous robes of poetry. Standing at midnight on the bridge of Louis XV. we may, for example, behold one of the most magnificent prospects in the world. On one hand, long lines of quays, bordered with glancing lights; on the other, the woods of the Champs Elysées towering above in dark masses to the sky. Between the trunks of the trees, lamps flash and twinkle; beneath you the Seine rolls its placid waters, gleaming with the bright reflections of stars and constellations. In front, the Place de la Revolution, which I have seen illuminated with camp-fires and bristling with pyramids of cannon-balls, expands its capacious bosom, and peoples your fancy with mighty and exciting associations. All around, buildings of great extent and elevation rise against the clear sky, and appear to your imagination emblazoned with historic deeds, and reminiscences of the Republic.

We, in England, are little apt to recognise all the majesty and grandeur of our capital; but, in my opinion, you may, any summer night, enjoy a prospect scarcely inferior from the heights above the Regent's Park. On all sides, stretching away

apparently to an interminable distance, rows of lamps shed their brilliant light upon the midnight air,—here half obscured by trees, there breaking in full splendour on the eye. Though in the vicinity of so many millions, you may gaze on that vast landscape for hours, without being disturbed by the sound of a single footstep. If anything be audible, it is, perhaps, the growl of the hyæna, or the voice of lions, *sera sub nocte rudentum;* while far in the distance, a world of muffled sound surges up into the atmosphere, from the thoroughfares of the modern Babylon, like the multitudinous voices of the ocean. No other European capital, however, possesses a bay like Naples, which, with Vesuvius, and the blue of the overhanging sky, and the soft intoxicating airs of night, combines to produce an effect upon the mind altogether unrivalled. On the evening in question, I advanced as through the creations of a dream, till the noise and bustle of the streets dispelled the illusion.

XVI.

As we desired to make the most of our time it was agreed that we should go first to the opera, and afterwards to proceed through the darkness to visit Herculaneum and Pompeii. My companions on this excursion were my friends from Egypt, with the charming little girl who had been my solace on board ship, in the lazaretto, and during the whole of my Sicilian journey.

If the Neapolitans are ill-governed, they certainly endure oppression with wonderful equanimity. They laugh, they sing, they eat maccaroni, they make love, they marry, as if Freedom, with all her glorious gifts, sat enthroned in their city.

At first I was offended at their merriment, as I had often been with that of the Egyptians. But it was of no use. My indignation could do them little good. So I looked on and laughed, and tried to be as indifferent as they were to the degradation of their noble country. When we had arrived in the passage leading into the opera, an unforeseen difficulty occurred. Crowds of well-dressed ladies and spruce cavaliers thronged after us, but when I drew near the door, the soldiers stationed there—for everything in Naples is done by soldiers—leisurely took his musket from his shoulder, at first I imagined for the purpose of discharging it at my revolutionary head. But I was mistaken. He merely placed it across the door to prevent my advancing, and then observed very coolly, "You can't go in, Signor."

"Exactly," said I, "while you keep the musket across the door-way, but if you will be obliging enough to take it away I see nothing else to hinder my entrance."

He pointed to my red cap, and at the same time could with difficulty repress a grin.

"Well, friend," inquired I, "is there any offence in my cap?"

It was contrary, he said, to rule for a man to go in with his head covered.

"In that case," I answered, "I will take it off;" and, suiting the action to the word, I bared my closely-shaven crown, which shone, I have no doubt, like a buttered turnip!

The gravity of the soldier was now completely upset, as well as that of the ladies who crowded the passage behind us, and had assisted, as the French express it, at our interesting colloquy.

"Deo santa," cried my military janitor, "you never can show yourself at the opera with that head!"

"I am sorry, friend," said I, "that I have no other."

"Put on your cap, Signor," he murmured, as well as he could for laughing; "I see nothing else that there is to be done.—I am sure his Majesty would not wish me to be so rude as to turn back a gallant cavalier from the door."

I made him a bow for the compliment, and replacing my tarboosh, moved forward with my little Egyptian friend, and sat down in the centre of the pit.

Let not what I am going to say be construed into vanity. Any one who will go into the theatre of San Carlo with a red cap on his head, may enjoy the same distinction,—all the opera-glasses in the house were levelled at me and the little Egyptian girl who sat upon my lap. We were

taken, I suppose, for an importation from Timbuctoo. Notwithstanding this exhibition of Neapolitan curiosity, we thoroughly enjoyed the music and the singing, though what the opera was, I know no more than Nebuchadnezzar. I do, however, recal one of the singers, a Roman girl, not unlike Brambilla, once well known in this country. She sang a pathetic air, and infused into her voice so much of the spirit of tenderness and melancholy that everybody appeared to be melted. The words were those of an exile, and described the charms of home as Adam might have described Paradise after he had been turned out of it for ever. The writer, I am sure, must have tasted of the bitterness of which he spoke. With what yearning does the soul sitting under the cloud of banishment strive to catch one single glimpse of the magic light that glows around his hearth! He pictures to himself his wife, with tear-dimmed eyes, looking down half unconsciously at her children, who ask her from time to time when their father will return.—She would, if she dared, pronounce the word "Never!" but she reserves the sting contained in that word for her own breast.

XVII.

When we returned to our hotel, it was some time after midnight. An excellent supper had been prepared for us, and according to custom we

did full justice to it, as well as to some delicious wine which our host, understanding the English propensities, had provided for us. Before two o' clock we were seated comfortably in our carriage on the way to Herculaneum. Dr. Oriel, who had cheerfully consented to be of the party, sat opposite me, ready with his legends and his learning, to illustrate if we desired it every step of the way: but long want of sleep often produces towards morning—I mean in me—a sort of torpor of mind, to some extent refreshing. The summer nights in the Campagna are never cold, and it was now towards the end of June. From the bay, however, which lay close on our right, came a breeze at once refreshing and full of softness. My thoughts meanwhile wandered backwards and forwards over an expanse of three thousand years, from the mythological age immediately before the sack of Troy, down to the moment in which King Bomba petticoated his statues, and thronged his prisons with unhappy Carbonari. It is pleasant on such occasions to have classical recollections with an unlimited supply of faith. In other moods of mind I might agree with the philosophers in melting down all the mythes of antiquity into symbol and allegory, but I now believed devoutly in the wanderings and exploits of Heracles, who founded both Herculaneum and Pompeii.

There is in some respects, an exquisite propriety in our education. The infancy of our lives, is

made to busy itself about the infancy of the world; so that in after years, when we desire to refresh the burning soil of manhood, rendered arid and almost waste by toil, memory has but to go back, and throw open certain little sluices, to set a thousand delicious springs flowing at once, which inundate the whole area of our thoughts with the ideas and reminiscences of childhood. The mingled fables of Greece and Rome, seemed to be now blended with the very air we breathed, while the entire map of the heavens over our heads, corroborated the testimony of the earth below. Both were only pictures of the beliefs, and hopes, and fears of early humanity, big with religion and philosophy, but as yet only beholding or prefiguring to itself in dreams the dimensions and achievements of its future offspring.

XVIII.

I wronged Dr. Oriel greatly, when I imagined him to be wholly indifferent to the actual state of Italy. He was a Christian in the largest sense of the word, and sympathised with every form of humanity. In him the Gospel was a living principle leading to good deeds, to benevolence, to charity, to whatever is holiest and noblest in our nature. He said that during his residence at Naples, he had made such inquiries as were practicable respecting

the Carbonari, of whom twenty thousand were said to be expiating in dungeons their passion for liberty. If these reports wrong the Neapolitan Government, it is its own fault. It should allow its prisons to be visited, and its criminal statistics to be examined. The Marquis of Ormond, in an extremely interesting volume, supplied some years ago all the information he could on the subject of Bomba's victims, and Mr. Gladstone has since, with true Christian earnestness, sought to interest all Christendom in the fate of the Neapolitan sufferers. I am less prudent than these two writers, and shall therefore express my earnest wish that the tyrant of Naples, and all his voluntary instruments, may yet expiate in the most suitable way, their crimes against the liberal party. All that is gallant or enlightened in the nation appeals hourly to divine justice, for punishment on the oppressors, and as a lover of my kind I pray that it may speedily overtake them.

XIX.

We arrived at the entrance to Pompeii, just as the first flush of dawn was showing itself in the east. Coming from a land of ruins, I was familiar with the sensations which in vast solitudes they are calculated to inspire. But Pompeii is a thing by itself. You do not enter it through avenues of

sphynxes, through obelisks, and gigantic columns, the remains as it were of a world of giants. Your way lies through leafy alleys, through spreading and umbrageous groves, through plants and flowers of the most delicate hues and structure. Scarcely, however, could we discern all this on entering. Our desire was to climb the summit of the theatre, and witness from that elevated spot, sunrise breaking over Pompeii. I make no pretension to rival the eloquent pens which have described this fallen city. My ambition is confined to the chronicling of my own sensations and ideas, as with a little knot of Oriental companions, I stood gazing from a crumbling wall, on the marvellous landscape around me. There was, no doubt, a basis of melancholy underlying all the reflections of the moment; but it did not suffice to tinge the vast system of imagery, which floated around me on all sides:—hills and valleys clad with vineyards—Vesuvius with his diadem of silvery vapour—the Calabrian mountains robed in crimson and blue—the promontories of Sorrento and Miseno, and the glowing expanse of waters, which they lovingly protect from the roughness of the outer sea.

"When Strabo stood here," observed Dr. Oriel, "the entire sweep of this vast amphitheatre was so thickly covered with temples, palaces, and houses, that it seemed but one prodigious city, stretching from promontory to promontory, a distance of thirty miles. And then, what reminiscences, what names.

peopled these shores!—from the heroes of the Iliad and the Odyssey, down to Lucullus, Augustus, and Nero."

The doctor went on, pouring forth quotations from the poets and historians, and reviving and placing vividly before us the Neapolis of the republican era, and the Parthenope of remoter days. But through the pellucid air, through the sunshine, through the still more glowing and golden light of history, the mephitic air of despotism breathes incessantly, diffusing a blight over the body and soul of man. Had the Neapolitans cultivated with sacred earnestness the worship of the sword, they would at this moment be masters of their own country, when it would wear a beauty such as distinguished it of old.

It is now only a gorgeous prison, where the puny descendants of the Romans smoke, fiddle, eat maccaroni, and greet with heartless and hollow cheers their tyrant Bomba as he passes.

XX.

Nothing like Pompeii exists anywhere in the world. To walk through its streets, appears like living in two ages at the same time: your senses speak to you of the present—your fancy and imagination, of the past. You enter house after house, you behold the domestic arrangements of antiquity, you visit the kitchens and the bed-chambers, the wine cel-

lars and the baths, and then you step out into the little, formal, sunny gardens, with fountains and arbours, over which the vines of to-day, creeping down from the summits of the ruins, have spread a network of leaves and tendrils glowing at intervals with bunches of rich grapes.

While standing in presence of these objects, I could not easily persuade myself I was looking at anything but a picture—and what a picture! along the tops of the crumbling walls, an accumulation of rich earth nourished an abundance of plants and bushes, which nodded and waved over the dormitories of the Romans. Fluted columns, and painted walls, and niches with elegant carvings, told where the beauties of other days had reposed or listened to the thunders of Vesuvius, or to the night winds breathing in effeminate softness over the neighbouring bay.

To complete the illusion, it would only be necessary to restore a few houses, and furnish them from the Museum at Naples. But, perhaps the best course would have been, to allow everything to remain where it was found. The goblets and vases on the tables, the porcelain on the window sills and cupboard shelves, the skeletons on the floor. One incident in the exploration of Pompeii everybody must remember: while proceeding through one of the subterranean passages, a skeleton was observed half buried in dust. When it had been removed, the impression of a woman's face

and bosom remained upon the dust, like an intaglio cut in lava. Who, and what was that woman? that she was young and beautiful, was obvious from the impression of her figure, before which the explorers stood in deep admiration. But while they gazed, the particles composing the mould crumbled in under the influence of the external air, and a few moments sufficed to perform for her portrait what seventeen centuries had done for her name and memory—obliterating all traces of them from the earth.

XXI.

I had come thither, full of reminiscences of the Egyptian cities, Thebes and Abydos, Tentyris and Apollinopolis Magna. But there was no resemblance even in the effect which the sight of them produce upon the mind: in the one, ideas of grandeur and sublimity fill the soul to the exclusion of sorrow and sadness—the generations which inhabited those mighty ruins, seem neither to ask nor need your sympathy. Like the desert and the rocks, the great river and the over-hanging sky, they suggest ideas of eternal contentment and repose, and often awaken in you the desire to lie down with them, and be at rest: this, at least, was the frame of mind in which I always found myself among the Egyptian monuments.

But at Pompeii it was different: the character of

the ruins was European; the houses, in part, resembled our own, and the civilization of those who had lived there formed a portion of our own civilization; and therefore, while looking at what remained of them; their bed-rooms, their couches, their little seats beside fountains, in their gardens, a thousand domestic associations were awakened, and my heart was wrung with pain.

Yet, why should we sorrow? they were only dead, and all must die. But there was something in the manner of their death, in its suddenness, in the fall by night of burning clouds of dust, in the suffocation, in the agony, in the quenching as it were all at once, of a whole city's vitality, which could not but suggest feelings out of the common order. Yet, did nature appear to sympathise in the least with them or us? No; the sun shone as brightly on their graves, as it had shone on their marriage processions; and now vines, and ferns, and mosses, and delicate grasses, mantled their dwellings and converted them into a gay parterre, to recreate the eyes of strangers.

XXII.

We examined the wheel ruts in the streets, pored over the inscriptions, serious, comic, or dissolute, which in many places covered the walls, admired the signs of the shops, and viewed with some degree of astonishment the marks left by cups

upon window seats. But where were the relics of their intellectual food, their books, their poetry, their histories? From Herculaneum a whole library of blackened and charred manuscripts was carried to Naples, where they still for the most part mock the science and curiosity of our age; yet how delightful it would be to examine the contents of a whole Pompeian bookcase—to know what volumes used most frequently to adorn the table of the boudoirs, or what for example the wife of Diomede read while sitting on a delicious summer's evening beside that cool fountain which still remains in the court of her garden, though for nearly two thousand years it has sent up no water.

XXIII.

On our return we visited Herculaneum, descended into the excavations of the Theatre, and wandered through all the dark passages which have been cut in the lava. Afterwards, by way of contrast, we examined the royal palace of Portici, with all those contrivances by which in modern times the vices of princes are pampered:—the secret dining rooms, the tables ascending and descending by springs, the luxurious sofas, pictures in style and execution resembling those which once adorned or degraded the palace of the Dukes of Orleans.

After this we returned with very mixed feelings

to Naples, in whose environs I could, I am sure, spend whole years conversing rather with the dead than the living. This is what my friend Dr. Oriel actually did. He however was a man very different from me. Though here in body, he was in the spirit absent, sometimes far away among those who had lived and thought and loved, when Italy was the abode of men sometimes soaring towards that region, where we all hope to receive what we have lost on earth. He often put me in mind of a reflection, or I should rather perhaps say of a conceit which once suggested itself to me. It seems to be sometimes supposed that life emerges from the earth, and that in infancy and old age we touch the ground, while the arch of our humanity rises highest in manhood. I think, on the contrary, that life resembles a reversed rainbow, beginning and ending in heaven; and most immersed in earthly interests and concerns, when it appears to be at its zenith. The child is an angel let loose upon the earth, and the old man is an angel putting on his wings for flight to a better world.

XXIV.

During my stay at Naples, I made, with Dr. Oriel, a little tour to the Phlegræan fields, of which, however, I shall attempt to give no description. The Doctor was familiar with the Canonico Iorio, who, with much learning and in-

genuity, has here attempted to discover above ground, what Virgil speaks of as existing in a subterranean world.

In such identifications I can put no faith. Mythology has a geography of its own, and deals with a separate creation, through the labyrinths of which neither canons nor topographers can guide you. Your own imagination must be your Sibyl, who presents you with the golden bough, at sight of which the wonders of the region you visit rise and develop themselves before you.

The sun was setting behind the sea as we entered into Pozzuoli. The Doctor, perfectly familiar with this fragment of the old poetical world, which, invested with a golden haze, was floated down to us upon the current of tradition from the remotest ages, undertook to be my guide, and after a hearty supper and a good bottle of Falernian, we set out with the rising moon, in search of sensations and reminiscences.

From many miseries with which day would have familiarised us, we escaped by this arrangement, especially from those troops of beggars who infest all the interesting places in Italy, and often so as to render them detestable: not that I am at war with poverty—God forbid! but that the mendicants I speak of are generally sturdy vagabonds, who instead of earning their own livelihood, prefer eating the bread of idleness.

The principal reason for this choice, however,

was, that we both desired to enjoy those illusions which the moon is so potent in creating.

XXV.

I have elsewhere remarked that the Italians are a stay-at-home people, and, above all things, hostile to nocturnal rambles. Experience perhaps has taught them that the darts of malaria are then most deadly, that fevers lurk in every marsh or lake, and that the very breeze bears along with it pestilence and death upon its wings. We both, however, considered ourselves seasoned, and entertained no apprehensions of disease.

Our courage was not without its reward. On all sides a creation of marvellous beauty presented itself to the eye: numerous small peaks, bald and glittering, curtains of naked rock, the *débris* of ancient craters, picturesque ruins, lakes tremulous with moonlight, groves, precipices, caverns filled with associations of heroic times.

Some have professed themselves grateful to Augustus for felling the woods which, in the time of the Republic, extended down to the brim of Averna. But my companion and I were not of this number; deadly as might have been the mephitic vapour rising through the forests, we would have gladly braved it to enjoy a view of the birdless lake, in all its pristine horror.

Its shores were now bleached like a skeleton.

and showed grim and ghastly in the moonlight. Beyond it, towards the left, extended the Elysian fields, according to the decision of modern learning; but the sacred bards of antiquity, directed by a nobler inspiration, located the blessed land far away in sunny seas, whither Boreas never reached to vex the waves, or dim the brightness of the atmosphere; but, instead, soft zephyrs breathed from the face of ocean, to fan and cool the divine inhabitants.

Most men love to regale their fancy on insulated spots apart from the vulgar world. Sancho Panza longed for an island, where he hoped to enjoy the *ne plus ultra* of human delight; and Homer and Pindar, the greatest of all legislators, in the world of bliss, had an eye to precisely the same theory, in providing a home for their favourite heroes.

Achilles, the *beau ideal* of friendship and filial piety, obtained from the gods, as his abode after death, an island in the Black Sea, where, in the stillness of night, or at "incense breathing morn," he wandered along the shore resounding with the voice of many billows, recalling to his memory the Hellespont and the Dardanian plain.

Menelaus, too, was assured by the Old Man of the Sea that his own fate would not be dissimilar; and the greatest among the victors at Olympia obtained, from their glowing panegyrist, the promise that their heroic souls should be ultimately translated to the palace of Chronos, where, in the midst of all

that is beautiful, they should enjoy a beatified existence *for* ever.

XXVI.

We sat down, the doctor and I, on a rock overlooking the whole surface of Avernus; and, lighting our cigars, began, I scarcely know how, to slide back from the fables of the mythology to our own hearths and homes. He had often made allusions to the story of his own life, and now selected this strange scene in which to relate it to me. When divested of the accompaniments, however, of his impressive manner and most musical voice, into which age and melancholy had infused a tenfold sweetness, it may lose very much of its interest: but the reader shall judge for himself. My desire is to preserve, as far as possible, the Doctor's simplicity of language, which, in part, at least, was probably acquired from his constant study of the Scriptures.

XXVII.

"Let me," he said, "out of no vanity, I trust, but simply out of respect for truth, state that my family is respectable—nay more, that it belongs to the highest section of the middle classes, and would appear to have been wealthy and powerful in times past. Yet, when I found myself in this

world, it had become poor withal, though not so poor as to debar me from a college education. When I had acquired what was deemed a sufficient store of knowledge, my friends got an engagement for me as tutor in an earl's family.

"This nobleman had one son, so young as scarcely to require instruction. My office, therefore, would have been almost a sinecure had he not had also in the house two sisters, whom he loved tenderly, and desired to see in possession of as much knowledge as possible. He proposed, therefore, that I should teach them Greek and Latin, together with Spanish and Italian, with which I had accidentally made myself acquainted.

"For this I received an increase of salary, though I protested it was needless, as I was already paid too much, seeing I did little or nothing for it, nearly all my time being left at my own disposal, to pursue my studies, or walk or ride, as best suited my humour. Well, Sir, time went on, and, when I had been in the house two years, the Earl sent for me one winter's evening into his library, and bade me take a chair by the fire, for that he had something to say to me. I did as I was desired, but at the same time began to feel uncomfortable, because there was a change in his manner, and, as it struck me, in the tones likewise of his voice.

"'Mr. Oriel,' said he, for I was not then a doctor, 'do you understand the obligations of

society, the distinctions of rank, and the duty which in this world a person owes to the man under whose roof he lives?'

"'My lord,' I replied, 'I know the difference between right and wrong, and I trust I am able to adhere to the former and eschew the latter.'

"'That is precisely what I doubt,' said he.

"I remained silent, not knowing what to answer. He then continued—

"'You know my sister, Ignatia; have you never made professions of love to her?'

"There was no difficulty. I never had; and I told him so.

"'But if you entertain improper feelings for her,' said he, 'would you hesitate to avow them to her?'

"I said, 'I trust I shall never entertain improper feelings for any woman; but if I did, I should certainly be ashamed to avow them to one so good and noble as your sister.'

"'You mistake me, Mr. Oriel,' said he; 'I mean from a man in your situation to a woman in hers.'

"I professed myself unable to comprehend him. A smile, but I know not whether of contempt or pity, played upon his lips. He then proceeded:—

"'Answer me, then. Do you love the Lady Ignatia?'

"'Not,' said I, 'that I am aware of.'

"'Are you insane, Mr. Oriel?' said he, starting

to his feet. 'Do you mean to tell me that you can be ignorant whether you love a woman or not?'

"'I can only say in answer, I would rather lose my life at once than be deprived of the pleasure of teaching her. But I do not know whether that is love; I am a simple scholar—I have been little in the world; above all, I have never known any other woman, save my mother and sisters.'

"'Well,' continued he, reseating himself and bidding me do the same, for I had followed his example in rising,—'well, you often talk with my sister,—has she never spoken to you of love? In one word, has she never confessed to you that she loved you?'

"'She has never made me so happy,' I replied.

"'Happy!' cried he. 'Do you think that would lead to happiness? Why, she may expect the hand of the first nobleman in England. Her fortune, her rank, her descent, entitle her to this.'

"'But, if she did not love him,' I replied, 'would she be happy? Now listen to me, my lord. If she loves me, as you say, let her be my wife, and I will do service for her as Jacob did for Rachel. I will remain all my life in your house, and teach your children, and do whatever you may require of me.'

"'By heaven!' exclaimed the Earl; 'you are a simpleton. Go. To-morrow you will give Ignatia no lessons; she is more, far more, to blame than

you are. I must talk with her, and see what is to be done.'

XXVIII.

"When I returned to my room I began to reflect upon my position. Of course, I should be immediately dismissed, and this would bring along with it a perpetual exclusion from Ignatia's presence.

"The prospect was inexpressibly painful. It led me to examine my own character and pretensions. What, after all, was I? I seemed to be a mere reed shaken by the wind; my knowledge shrank to nothing. I had neither eloquence nor riches, nor power, and felt perfectly helpless.

"'Well,' murmured I, 'God's will be done; I am in his hands. If happiness is to be my lot, it will be; if not, I am ready to suffer whatever He may appoint.' In this frame of mind I went at length to sleep, and, Sir,—will you forgive an old man for dwelling on such matters?—as soon as my eyes were closed Ignatia appeared before me.

"The expression of her countenance I can never forget. It seemed to have a twofold surface; the one earthly, but withal transparent, through which I beheld another—bright and luminous and full of love, like that of a seraph. It did not seem at all to belong to this world. There was so much elevation, so much happiness in it.

"'Be of good cheer, my friend,' said she, placing

her right hand on my forehead, while the other remained pressed upon her heart,—'be of good cheer; God has joined us, and no man shall put us asunder.'

"The ecstacies of prophets and holy men when inspiration has descended to them from heaven, could not have exceeded mine at that moment. My feelings were too big for sleep,—I awoke with a start, and looked round me, but all was darkness; I turned, therefore, to the other side, pressed my head into the pillow, and sought to compose myself again, in the hope that the vision would return. But in vain; no sleep came to me, and I remained in a sort of doubtful happiness till day.

"When I descended I was informed that the Earl desired me to breakfast with him alone, in the library. I found him calm and kind, but withal resolute, as it appeared to me. He poured out the tea, he handed me the toast, he smiled at me occasionally, but in spite of all this I felt afraid of him, for he had my destiny in his hands. At length he said—

"'As you are in orders, Mr. Oriel, you would probably not be displeased to be presented with a good living.'

"I turned as pale as marble, and the cold sweat stood thick upon my face. He saw this, and evidently took compassion on me. But pursuing his own plans, he continued—

"'You surely have not entered the Church against

your inclination, and cannot be reluctant to perform the duties of your sacred office.'

"'My lord,' I said, 'do not, I entreat you, misunderstand me. I have vowed to be a servant of God, and I trust I shall never be untrue to my vow. But we are not entirely the masters of ourselves, and sometimes on account of other causes shrink ungratefully or ignorantly from what may be best for us. I am a plain, simple man, as you must long since have noticed, and as you have hitherto borne with me, I hope you will bear with me still. But if you would make me to-day Archbishop of Canterbury, on condition that I should quit this house, and at the same time would give me the option of remaining, I would consent for ever to be a humble tutor in preference.'

"'Well,' said the Earl, good-naturedly, placing his hand in mine, 'I respect your feelings, but I also have feelings which you must respect. My sister Ignatia is scarcely eighteen; you are yourself a mere youth, in habits and character more than in years. What would become of you both should I consent to an union, for which all my friends would overwhelm me with ridicule? I do not mean to hurt your feelings, Mr. Oriel, but there is, you must perceive, a great difference between the condition of a tutor and that of a countess.'

"At that moment I did indeed feel the difference, and replied, much more like a child than a man—

"'I wish I had never been born.'

"Almost any other person would have laughed at me, but if he felt the inclination, he restrained it.

"'Come, Mr. Oriel,' said he, 'let us talk of business. There is a rich living in my gift. It is worth indeed,' said he, 'nearly three thousand a-year, and it is entirely at your service, if you will accept it.'

"My heart was full of gratitude, as he might have seen by the childish moisture in my eyes; but along with it there was a fear which I could not master. I therefore replied, tremblingly—

"'My lord, be not angry with me, or suppose that I slight your goodness; but riches have really no charms for me, I do not desire them. I would rather, if I may, continue under your roof in the humblest capacity, so that,'—the sentence remained unfinished.

"'I understand you,' said he, 'so that you may see and converse with Ignatia. This, however, is impossible. Still, do not imagine I shall act unkindly towards you; I have myself endured the pangs of the heart, have felt what I trust few will be condemned ever to feel again—.' He paused, and turned away his face for a moment, for his voice was broken.

"He then looked at me, and added—'But no matter, we will talk no more on the subject at present.'

XXIX.

"When I had left him to attend to the instruction of his son, he sent for his sister, and in the gentlest and most affectionate manner, represented to her the folly of loving a man so much her inferior, concluding with these words,—

"'You must know, my dear Ignatia, that your marriage with Mr. Oriel is absolutely impossible."

"There never was a woman who had more of a woman's gentleness than Ignatia, but she had also a woman's firmness; she therefore replied:—

"'Dear Edward, you do not talk like yourself: think what mountains of difficulties once stood between you and Mary; yet you married her, and have you ever to this hour regretted that you did so?'

"Her brother tried to look stoical, and remained silent.

"'You observed just now,' said she, 'that I am only eighteen. It is quite true, but in three years I shall be twenty-one, and if you oppose my wishes I will yield to you, and be a prisoner till that period; but as soon as the clock strikes twelve I will walk out of the house and marry Mr. Oriel, if he will have me. I say if he will have me, because he has never spoken to me of love, still less of marriage. Do not call this wilfulness, or disobedience, or a reckless sacrifice of the character

and the understanding to the passions; for if you can show me that he is unworthy in any respect, I am ready to relinquish him from this moment.'

"The Earl took his sister in his arms, and kissing her affectionately, said:—

"'Dear Ignatia, be it as you will; I love the man myself, though I verily believe he is the greatest simpleton that God ever made.'

"Ignatia laughed through her tears, and answered,

"'But love, you know, Edward,—'

"'True,' said he, 'love has wrought miracles before now; and we shall see. Be that as it may; you have my consent, and may marry him to-morrow, if you will.'

"Hasty things do not always prosper, but our marriage was brought about in haste; and yet, Sir, it is my belief that the very angels in heaven never, during the same period, tasted an equal amount of felicity. We were the happiest of the creatures of God; children came to us one after another, fair and beautiful."

He arose and walked to and fro upon the rock, he was very much shaken, he took out his pocket-handkerchief, wiped his eyes, and remained looking at the lake for several minutes. Then, in some degree recovering his composure, he resumed his seat and continued:—

"The Earl bestowed on me the living he had offered me in exchange for his sister. Without her it would have been, I dare not say a curse, but it

would have been entirely without value. With her it proved a great blessing, for it lay on her brother's estate, and therefore kept us together.

"It may seem romantic, and indeed to many fantastical and absurd, but in my own experience it is true, nevertheless, that the love which lighted up my hearth was of more value than all the wealth of the Indies.

"Poets, writing of their mistresses, Sir, sometimes say they would not give a lock of their hair for the sceptre of the world. I know not what the sceptre of the world may be, but if a ringlet from my wife's head would in the minutest degree have diminished her attractions, I, as a Christian and a servant of God, would not have given it for the world. Nor does this appear to me at all extravagant, for what constitutes your happiness you desire to keep entire.

XXX.

"Our house was beautifully situated, and we had a garden laid out with the most extreme care; this my study window overlooked, and often in the summer evening while Ignatia walked there, I thought, as I raised my head from my book to gaze at her, that she cast a glory on the flowers as she moved. Again and again have I thrown aside my work to go and join her.

"But when in due time a little Ignatia walked

by her side, with its little hand in hers, it seemed absolutely too much; all the enjoyment of the world seemed to be poured into my soul until it knew not how to contain it. But do not imagine that all this while I neglected my duties as a Christian: love implies charity, and kindness, and beneficence, and whatever else is good. Ignatia had a love for everything that breathed, and sought to extirpate suffering from the world.

"With regard to our parishioners, they appeared to have been rendered pious as if by a miracle, it was no merit of mine, I assure you. They came to church, I believe, to look at Ignatia, who seemed to shed a holy light around her in which the good people loved to bask; through this halo also they looked at me, and in the frame of mind produced by it, listened to my sermons, which consequently appeared to do much good. Going to church was a comfort to them, so that they often used to congregate under the yews before the doors were opened, each anxious to have the pleasure of being the first.

"Do not think that I speak this out of vanity, for when she was taken from me, everything took a different turn. The people became sad, and remained at home, probably I knew not what I said,—but this is anticipating,—let me return to Ignatia.

"You have seen—everybody has seen—women who have a beauty besides that of their persons;

yet in form and features Ignatia was beyond description lovely. I should not, perhaps, say she was tall, though people generally thought her so; her figure was infinitely graceful, and her walk such as I have never seen before or since.

"But the face, Sir,—its beauty, if I may dare to say so, seemed worthy of the Almighty hand that made it. Her eyes were deep blue, the features all symmetry and softness, with an expression over them which often suggested to me the idea that she wore her pure soul about her like a veil.

"I have said we had children, and never shall I forget her appearance while sitting in a low chair suckling them. I remember once we had a boy,—our only boy,—and it was summer: Ignatia sat before an open window with her baby on her lap; it was full of health, and its eyes flashed and sparkled as it lay at her snowy breast.

"To indulge in some fancy, she loosed and let down her auburn hair, which fell over the little urchin's head and over parts of her bosom, like a cloud of gold. Her eyes were turned down upon the child's face, and for the moment I think she forgot everything external to themselves, even me. I sat beside her, and gazed at the picture, and as I did so, I sent up a silent prayer that God would preserve her to me for ever.

XXXI.

"I am not at all able to explain in what the sanctity and power of religion consist: but it seems to me as if our souls formed the point of contact between heaven and earth, which are molten as it were in that fiery furnace, and blended together, so as at length to make but one. I am very much a man of earth,—earthly have been my idols, earthly my affections, earthly my loves, but yet there have been times, and indeed not a few, when the love of God has appeared to absorb and consume all others.

"I remember, for example, one Sunday during the whole of which I may be said, with St. Paul, to have been carried up into the third heaven, and to have felt and witnessed things not susceptible of description in human language. I took my text from the Hebrews, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.'

"My custom was to preach extempore, which I could easily do, because my congregation loved me, and would consequently have listened reverently to anything from my lips: God forgive me, therefore, if I ever led them into error, for they trusted in me, and never once suspected that I could possibly lead them astray: nor could I have done so consciously, for I have always been possessed by a holy love of truth, however

unable to give utterance to my thoughts, or to transplant my sentiments into the minds of others.

"On the Sunday in question, Summer had decked itself in all its pride. Trees of delicate foliage grew close to the church, and the long green leaves as they waved to and fro in the soft breeze, came rustling every now and then against the majestic old Gothic windows. All the air seemed full of celestial music, the birds sang, the casements gently rattled, and the tinkling of bells from many flocks came floating sweetly to my ear from a distance. I seemed to be carried back to patriarchal ages, and to stand with Abraham beside his tent in the plains of Mamre.

"Before me sat Ignatia with her children, and as the sunshine streamed over her and them, they seemed only so many embodiments of golden clouds which the wind builds up in the firmament, like fleeting, silent worshippers of God.

"The world might perhaps have said, could it have followed the habitual currents of my thoughts, that I was a worshipper of mere human beings. But, in reality, Ignatia and her children were only so many altars on which the heart burnt its incense in honour of God. It was He that had made them, and not they themselves; they were His people and the sheep of His pasture. I think now what I felt then, that Ignatia was the incarnation of some divine essence, sent down purposely to win back souls to their Maker. Had I been ever so

wicked she would have reclaimed me. It would have beeen difficult to look on her, and wholly impossible to live with her, and retain any evil thoughts. When the singing went on, she always sang with the congregation, and her voice carried me aloft above the archangels and the cherubim.

XXXII.

"It was the Almighty's pleasure that she should not decay like other women. During the whole time we lived together, no change came over her body or soul, except that she appeared to be always ascending some luminous eminence of virtue, which brought her at every step nearer her original home.

"Her beauty increased with her years. A golden light, like that of dawn, played about her eyes, while out of the soft depths of her voice came a music sweet as that of heaven. If she ever in her life did a wrong thing, it was in loving me, who am every way unworthy to have possessed the heart of such a woman.

"You see my external form, how ungainly and uncouth it is. My mind is no better; on the contrary, it is if possible still less in harmony with the original type of human nature. One thing only did she find in me, and that she was good enough to take in lieu of all other excellences—I loved her with an unbounded love, insomuch that her idea seemed sometimes to banish from my

spirit the idea of God himself. But it was He who gave me the love, and He will forgive me.

XXXIII.

"Can I, Mr. St. John, can I revert to the day which for me covered the earth with the blackness of darkness for ever! Our children, who were moulded out of our souls, had gone before. God had called them home, and we knew they were safe in his keeping: yet a softened melancholy had descended and settled upon us both, but instead of diminishing our love it only augmented it.

"The love of happy days, of success, of triumph, is a sweet and buoyant love; but the love of sorrow is still sweeter. Every link that grief binds about the heart only makes it yearn more strongly for sympathy; and from whence can man derive sympathy but from the woman he loves!

"It was a fine morning in June. I awoke first, and saw Ignatia slumbering sweetly beside me; yet into the sweetness some ingredients of bitter had been infused, for the big tears, escaping from her eyelids, followed each other gently down her cheeks. A smile was at the same time upon her lips, so that her tears might have been those of joy. I wish I could have taken them into my heart as they fell, and preserved them in that receptacle for ever.

"Her beautiful head was nestled softly on her pillow; her long eyelashes shaded her cheeks; her hair, which had got loose during the night, hung in confused masses of gold over her shoulders and breast. I looked at her, and know not how it was, but I felt she was dreaming of our children, and fancying they were kissing her loving lips as they had been wont to kiss them of old.

"This thought soon reached the fountain of my own tears, and as I leant over her, they dropped half scalding upon her face. All the little eyes that had formerly glittered around hers, like stars about the moon, seemed to be once more floating and glittering in the air. My face sank on hers. She awoke, and straining me earnestly to her breast, whispered gently, 'They are coming for me to-day.' I understood her meaning, and replied in the same tone, 'And for me also, I trust.'

"'That must be as God pleases,' she replied; 'but for myself, the term of my life is drawing near. I must leave you, though not with my own will, for God is my witness, I would rather be here than in heaven,—at least,' she added, faintly, 'till you join me there.'

XXXIV.

"Alarmed beyond expression, I leaped from the bed, and rung the bell violently, for I felt that some great calamity was about to fall upon me. I

then sent immediately for a physician, but remained myself by the bed-side. Ignatia desired me to be calm, for that her end was come, and nothing could prolong her life.

"Still no change was visible, save that her cheeks became gradually paler, her eyes more dim, her lips less red. But let me not dwell on these moments of agony. Before the physician arrived Ignatia had passed away. Nor could I ever conjecture of what complaint she died, seeing she had experienced no sickness nor suffering, except the anguish of the mind. Among persons of the world,—among the great, the ambitious, and often even among the learned, love is thought to be a fragrant but fragile flower, which blooms in the first moments of our spring, and then fades for ever. But in Ignatia it knew no decay; nor do I believe that had God spared her to me, she would have loved me less on account of my age. These wrinkles, these dim eyes, these hollow and pale cheeks, would to her have been only so many symbols of unchanging faith and constancy.

"This idea has often occurred to me when gazing on what remains of some ruined temple. To the world, to the crowds worshipping at some new shrine, those sacred walls may seem to be desecrated and deserted by the divinity; but in every mouldering stone, and crumbling arch, and shattered column, the spirit of the forgotten faith lives as truly as ever.

"I am myself a ruin; power I never had; neither did personal beauty, or wealth, or worldly station fall to my share: but all the chambers of my inner life have been filled with the light of love, which will continue to burn brightly within me to all eternity.

XXXV.

"It was now, for the first time, that I felt the full value of the blessed hope of everlasting life. When I had shed tears till my eyes were dim, when I had neglected my person and my duty, when I had debased myself in the dust, when I had sat for whole nights upon the grass which began to grow over the grave, God took mercy on me, and gave rise in my heart to a hope which reconciled me to life. But I fear I have not, since then, been of much value to the world.

"The Earl, who by this time had learnt to love me like a brother, now took me back into his house, set another person to perform my duty, and sought by inexhaustible kindness to reconcile me to my loss. He said he honoured me for the love I bore his sister, for the happiness she had enjoyed in my society, and for the way in which I cherished her memory.

"But no joys that could be strictly termed secular ever came to me after that. Still, while my brother-in-law lived, I was bound by a sort of tie, to the place where I had been happy. But he too, at

length went; and then I bethought me of coming to this country, where, amid the dust and ruins of past generations, I might nourish my soul perpetually with the thoughts of death, and thus pass away the interval that is to divide me from Ignatia —for I cannot doubt that I shall know her, and love her, in heaven, which indeed—God forgive me —would scarcely be heaven to me if I should not find her there."

Here Dr. Oriel may be said to have concluded his narrative, though after a short pause, he spoke again, saying:

"You may, perhaps, be surprised at me, as in some sort I am at myself, considering I have lost children—but, would you believe it, Sir? the only real happiness I ever enjoy is, when I have a child in my arms.

"The flood-gates of other years seem then to be thrown open to me. Joy flows around me like a flood: I forget myself—I forget everything—and as the child lisps and looks up into my face; the voice of Ignatia seems to be murmuring near.

"Next to a baby is an antique funeral urn, containing the ashes of some beloved woman, with the inscription which love cut deep in the marble two thousand years ago. Out of the dark bosom of such an urn, inspiration comes to me! Pagan in form, it is truly Christian in purpose, since it throws open to our souls a glimpse of that immortality which love first suggested to the human race.

"Since it is not so much for ourselves that we desire to be immortal, but that our souls may receive for ever, the blessing raining in upon us from without—first from God, the Father of all blessings, and then from those whom he has made the ministers of happiness to us."

When I had heard the doctor to an end, I felt more respect for the very earth on which we tread. Let others speak as they find. For myself, I think there is so much goodness in human nature, that it only asks the assistance of somewhat favourable circumstances, to re-invest itself with the beauty and the purity it originally lost. Indeed, there are some individuals in this world, coarse and material as it may seem, who are scarcely lower than the angels; whose hearts are so many altars on which the incense of a loving and a grateful spirit is daily burned, and sends up a sweet savour to heaven.

XXXVI.

The hour of departure having arrived, I found myself on board the steamer, gliding gently out of the bay. Others might have quitted Naples with regret. It was the reverse with me—my *lares* and *penates* lay beyond the Alps, and I should have been at that moment impatient of delay even in the garden of Eden.

The passengers were distributed in motley groups over the deck—Romans, Armenians, Ger-

mans, Poles, French, English. I observed one man with an immense straw hat, and white jacket and trousers, standing near the wheel, and casting wistful glances towards the receding city. His features were so ugly, that they would have been coarse, but for an air of deep seriousness amounting almost to melancholy, which overspread them and imparted dignity to his aspect.

It struck me, I know not why, that he must be an American, and as I cherish a strong partiality for our transatlantic brethren, I could not repress my desire to converse with him. He proved, however, to be a Russian nobleman—brother to one of those generals who have committed so many ravages in the Caucasus, and sustained so many disgraceful reverses from the Circassians. He had himself been engaged in that barbarous struggle, but loathing the service until his nausea became converted into malady, he had obtained the Czar's permission to return to civilized Europe.

Persons of his class and nation often tremble to express a political opinion, even to a single individual in a private room in London. But this nobleman, whose name, for obvious reasons, I suppress, appeared in all he said utterly regardless of consequences; for he not only condemned the atrocious system of warfare carried on against the free tribes of the Caucasus, but predicted the overthrow of the Imperial power and the establishment of an aristocracy upon its ruins.

Never have I met a more frank or earnest advocate of the privileged orders. With the people, properly so called, he had no sympathy, and, as was natural, spoke contemptuously of all those movements which have taken place in Europe for their emancipation. According to his notion, the aristocracy were originally designed by providence to regulate the political concerns of the world, for which he considered them qualified by birth, education, and opulence; while those persons who are engaged in ordinary pursuits in the acquisition of wealth, or in supporting mere existence, are wholly incapable of elevating their minds to the level of state affairs.

"Among people in general," he observed, "the ideas entertained of government are mean and paltry. They think of nothing but their individual ease and satisfaction, and are incapable of making great sacrifices for the public good. It is impossible, therefore, by any contrivance, to elevate their minds to the comprehension of statesmanship and sovereignty."

He profoundly despised the Germans, but the Italians still more. Austria in his opinion was a virtual dependency of Russia, and would ultimately dwindle into a province, in which case all Italy would inevitably follow in its train.

XXXVII.

But I must not enter into political discussions, whatever temptations they may hold out to me, otherwise I shall never arrive at Lausanne; neither can I now pause to describe the Italian coast, from Naples to Piedmont, or my visit to Civita Vecchia, or my adventures at Leghorn.

As my Egyptian companions were proceeding by the steamer all the way to Marseilles, I left them at Genoa, and proceeded by the way I had come alone to Milan. Here, however, at the hotel, I became acquainted with a Prussian traveller, with whom in the afternoon I used to ride about in an open carriage on the Corso. As my hair was not yet a quarter of an inch long, it was still necessary for me to wear the tarboosh, which in shape and colour suggested to the Austrian police reminiscences of the Phrygian bonnet, or cap of liberty.

While we moved backwards and forwards amidst hundreds of gay equipages, I was treated, therefore, with a degree of attention far greater than would otherwise have fallen to my share, and at length the keeper of the hotel where I lodged was warned against harbouring me, and an order was issued by the authorities for expediting my departure from the Lombard capital.

It happened, however, that my own arrange-

ments exactly suited those of the Austrian Governor, since I set out in time to spare him the necessity of escorting me to the gates with a file of soldiers. It was feared, I presume, that my formidable red Fez and blue tassel might give rise to an insurrection, and put to hazard the Austrian rule beyond the Alps. As it happened I experienced no violence and received no actual insult; but the prolonging of my stay for a few days, would probably have exposed me to considerable discomfort and annoyance.

XXXVIII.

On leaving Milan my only companion was an Italian gentleman, who was proceeding to visit the Lago Maggiore. We had hired a carriage between us, and as we went along conversed as agreeably as we could.

He was a man of letters, and had many years before visited England, where, at Liverpool, he had become acquainted with Roscoe, the distinguised historian of the Medici, as well as with Thomas, the only one among his sons, who has devoted himself exclusively to literature, and acquired an European reputation.

He knew also Coleridge, Lamb, Southey, and Sir Walter Scott, for whose novels he appeared to cherish a peculiar admiration. He had known Shelley at Pisa, and had been at some pains to understand his poems, though not as it seemed to

me with very remarkable success. Mrs. Shelley he remembered with great pleasure. He had been introduced to Mr. Macaulay, and thought very highly of him as well as of Mr. Walter Savage Landor; but his favourite author was Mr. Hallam, whose "Middle Ages," and "Constitutional History of England," he had studied with peculiar care.

He deeply lamented that Italy, properly speaking, had no contemporary literature, and repeated with melancholy satisfaction the illustrious names of those among her children who had formerly contributed so largely to the enlightenment of Christendom.

We parted not without some regret at Sesto Calendi, and I proceeded alone to Arona, situated prettily on the banks of the Lago Maggiore. I had now become so restless, excited, and impatient, that scarcely anything but rapid motion could afford me pleasure. This, however, was Saturday night, and the diligence by which I intended to perform the rest of my journey, would not leave till Monday morning.

I took refuge after dark in smoking and strolling, without any fixed purpose, about the streets, till sheer weariness sent me back to my inn, where about midnight I endeavoured to snatch a little sleep.

XXXIX.

Next day I arose with the dawn to explore at that sweet hour the town and its environs. It was towards the latter end of June, and the weather was inexpressibly serene. A holy calm breathed through the atmosphere, and the sun had not yet risen when I arrived in front of a church, the door of which had already been thrown open.

"Fas est et ab hoste doceri."

I admire above everything the practice of the Roman Catholics, of rendering their places of worship accessible at all hours. I went into the church, the picture of which will remain ineffaceably in my memory among the sweetest and holiest things I ever beheld. God knows I am far enough both in feeling and principle from Rome, but I have no war with its sacred edifices or even its ordinary forms of devotion.

When I entered, there were only a few early worshippers scattered here and there in kneeling postures, with their arms crossed reverently on their breasts in silent prayer. They were nearly all women, many of them apparently young peasant girls from the neighbourhood, who had risen at this delightful hour, to send up the incense of their innocent thoughts to God.

For some minutes I almost fancied myself to be looking at a bright picture. The floor, a chequered

pattern of black and white marble, was spacious, and clear of all incumbrances, and when the sun rose and flooded the painted windows with light, long streaks of purple, crimson, and amethyst streamed across the whole building; the soft morning breeze playing gently with the casements, which made the only sound audible.

What a stillness, what a calm prevailed! The antique carving, the paintings, the chapels, the niches, the little recesses of deep shadow, the high altar and the twinkling tapers, shed a poetical illusion over the scene. Religion was there, though veiled behind an accumulation of ordinary symbols.

I went a little out of sight and joined those who knelt. What were my thoughts and what was my prayer need not be remembered here. I departed refreshed and comforted, and returned to the inn to prepare for my visit to the Borromean islands.

XL.

Montesquieu, one of the greatest of the French writers, though he has I think based his style on false principles, dwells with rapture on the beauty of these isles. To describe them exceeds my ambition: an army of travellers have vied with each other in this enterprise, and perhaps none has succeeded. The thing may therefore be regarded as impossible, and to all who desire to form a

correct idea of them, and the lake, I would, in the words addressed to Nathaniel in the Gospel, say, "Come and see."

The cool grottoes below, from which you catch at intervals a view of the placid waters, the palace and terrace gardens above, supply the most astonishing contrasts. I placed myself on the summit of the Isola Bella, and looked around.

On one side the shore of the lake descended by a gradual depression towards the plains of Lombardy, on the other rose the Alps, through the inequalities of whose routes the waters of the lake find their way into unknown depths. A silvery haze tinged with blue, curtained the irregular slopes of the mountains, while far away towards the south-west the golden waters danced in sunshine beneath a sky of celestial azure.

At short intervals along the shores, palaces, country houses, churches, villages, and white cottages, gleamed among umbrageous verdure, which partly hid, partly revealed them. The Alps seemed nothing but one vast receptacle for cool breezes, which they could send down when necessary to refresh the sultry summer plains.

What a combination of beauty and fertility! What a dwelling-place for man, if the light of liberty could but be united there with that of the sun! As it was, I regarded the beautiful landscape with deep melancholy, and would have given half my life to behold one of the legions of the old

[illegible] suddenly from the earth to scare the [illegible] that had [illegible] which the [illegible] of their [illegible] words had [illegible] imperishable story.

II.

In the palace there is a picture representing Susanna, whose chaste presence is not, as usual, desecrated by the figures of the detestable elders. She is sitting alone in an arbour, and looking at a beautiful cool pond, in which she evidently designs to bathe. As yet, however, she has not begun to undress, though it seems clear she is thinking of it with what may be called a doubtful pleasure. The translucent water looks inviting, but it likewise looks cold, and she has not quite made up her mind to undergo the gentle shock.

I took a chair and sat down opposite this picture, which, though painted three hundred years ago, seemed to be the portrait of my own wife. The likeness, so far as I could trust to very powerful memory, was exact: the artist had evidently taken his *beau ideal* from some northern woman, with rich auburn hair, bright blue eyes, and white, smooth forehead; such as, taken all together, you seldom behold in the south.

As I seemed to bestow little notice on the other works of art, but remained pertinaciously looking at this, the conservatori came to me, and said he

would tell me an anecdote of that picture.—A Polish exile, who had been suffered to reside at Milan, used some years ago to come regularly once a month to gaze at it. He never took notice of anything else, but on entering the palace went straight to the spot where I then sat, and continued looking at the features on the canvass till his eyes were too much dimmed by tears to suffer him to distinguish them.

"For a long time," added the conservatori, "I could not venture to ask him the reason of his sorrow; but at length I did take that liberty, when he assured me that it was an exact likeness of his wife, who, when he had been driven from Poland, was not suffered to accompany him. It is now several months," added the honest Lombard, "since he has been here, and I trust, therefore, he has been permitted to return to the society of the woman he so much loved." I expressed the same hope, and then descended from the palace to the boat which was to convey me to the Isola Madre.

This little isle, being almost left in its natural state, seemed to me far more lovely than the other. It was then entirely converted into a nursery for pheasants, which, under a canopy of fine wire, roamed about in all their brilliant plumage over the soft grass.

XLII.

When one has for a long time been travelling over plains, the approach to mountains, especially when of vast elevation, is undeniably delightful; but when they also form the steps, as it were, to your own hearth, the feeling assumes a character which it would be difficult to express in language, at least, without apparent exaggeration.

I am a man of few possessions, all of which the smallest place is large enough to hold. Yet the Alps, at the moment of which I am speaking, seemed nothing but a framework to contain my house. If this be thought vanity, let it be so; it is not the less true on that account. Speaking of that little agglomeration of stones and mortar, with the living beings it contained, I a thousand times murmured to myself in the words of Goldsmith,—

> "Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,
> My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee."

And this must be every man's feeling, so that if it be not new, it is certain to be intelligible.

From Adam downwards, everybody has been endeavouring, by spoken or written words, by moulded clay, by chiselled marble, or by painted canvass, to give permanence to the thoughts and feelings of his soul. Yet, such is the finiteness of our powers, no man, it is probable, has ever suc-

ceeded, and one cause of failure has been the impression which weighs upon us all,—that we have nothing new to say.

But why should we be so much in love with novelty? why should we be so solicitous that what we think should be new? As Lear says, "The heavens themselves are old," and there is a pleasure in old things, in old friends, in old familiar faces, in the old dwellings of our family and of our race.

Old countries are far more exquisite than new; it seems that every footmark left upon the earth by a man, renders it dearer and more sacred to us. Look at the floors, the gardens, the walks, the alleys, over which the feet of our children have passed in playfulness. Have they not thus been rendered a sort of Acropolis of the heart? Do not we say after long absence, "We are returning to the old house?" and when our dwelling-place happens to be not old, there is a trick, a sophistry in the heart, by which we render it so.

Do not we employ contradictory phrases, in which we confound together youth and age, in order, if I may borrow a word from our forefathers, to express the artificial diuternity of love? Does not a man say old girl to his young wife; and does not the young wife speak of her young husband as the dear old fellow?

The meaning is plain. We are endeavouring to express the idea that the love of the person so

denominated has been coeval with our lives,—that we know of no time when it was not, and that if we did, we do not wish to remember it.

XLIII.

I often, by this sort of reasoning, endeavoured to explain the feeling with which I regarded my home in Switzerland. It was not, properly speaking, located in any particular house, but rested wherever my *penates* might happen to be set up.

Time is susceptible of infinite division, and there is an art by which moments may be made to perform for the soul the office of ages. Ordinary duration is an insignificant thing, but it is interwoven, as it were, with certain golden links or points, which we regard as worth far more than all the rest.

These are the summits of our existence, on which, when we stand, we are near heaven. Everybody has such little oases in the desert of his life—if in reality life can ever be said to be a desert to any one. It has not certainly been so to me; on the contrary, it has been nearly all oases, and little or no desert; though, if I were carefully to map it out, there might, no doubt, be little dark spots every here and there on which calamity had left its mark, like the crosses, set up in Catholic countries, where a great crime has been committed.

But it is no fanaticism to say that calamity is not useless. It is, as it were, one of the wholesome

bitters that give health and strength to our souls. We never know what we are, or perceive half the good that is in us, till we have felt deep and pungent sorrow.

It has been, no doubt, said or thought a thousand times, that as secret writing is made visible by being brought near the fire, so the greatness and tenderness of the heart are brought out into strong relief by suffering.

The whole of our lives is a system of compensations. I had been attacked in Egypt by ophthalmia, and suffered very severely from it, insomuch that my sight was rendered weak, and has continued so ever since. Well, that certainly was an evil. But was it accompanied by no good? I think it was. It gave me a relish of one half of our lives—of that which is spent in darkness—much greater and sweeter than that which appears to be experienced by most other persons.

I have a singular passion for the night, when all our thoughts are pillowed, as it were, on darkness, and appear to be wafted on the ebon wings of the goddess far out into the illimitable spaces of the universe. This I account for, partly, by the impatience of light, originating in the weakness of my eyes. There may also be other causes,—as my natural tendency to be in love with ignorance, or in other words, to delight in the unknown.

XLIV.

Looking back, I have often thought that those ages were most happy which imagined our dear old earth to be altogether boundless, and to consist of a series of lands and oceans, intermingled, God knows how, and inhabited by races of all sorts of characters and propensities. Science has now extinguished this idea, and sent us away in search of the material infinite, to the remotest stars and nebulæ of our universe. This may be a far more enlightened view of nature, but it is by no means so comfortable. Travelling across oceans of cold impalpable ether, appears to me a very uninteresting piece of business. I love trees, rivers, sands, sparkling waves, and, above all, innumerable faces of men and women.

It was night when we began to ascend the Alps, and at first perfectly dark. I had secured myself a place in the cabriolet of the diligence, where, as good luck would have it, at the outset I had no companion. This was a delicious enjoyment, for I had companions enough within, who were both willing and able to entertain me.

The horses were drowsy, the driver was equally drowsy, and so our vehicle moved on like some enchanted machine, hurried, by I know not what agency, through wild and desolate places.

I am a desperate naturalist, and therefore cannot

tell what birds inhabit the southern slopes of the Alps, and issue forth at night, screaming like the mews and cormorants which haunt the margin of the ocean. However, as we went along I heard, now on the right, now on the left, the voice of some winged voyager, "from the nights' Plutonian shore," who was soaring or plunging through the air in search of prey or pleasure.

He had probably no conception, whoever he may have been, of what delight he afforded me. His harsh and dissonant notes called up before my fancy a thousand pictures of bright and sunny shores, strewn with gorgeous shells, dotted with white birds, and bordered with waves, leaping around the Nereids, and laughing at the approach of Helios.

I am ignorant of the mechanism of our minds, and, above all, of that great law of association which links together distant things in an indescribable chain. Walking long after midnight through the Regent's Park, between the different portions of the Zoological Gardens, I find my imagination often carried back to that Alpine night by the screams of aquatic birds, brought together from distant countries.

This is part, at least, of the poetry of zoology. I fancy I hear the voice of the Nile, or of the Tyrrhene sea, or the whispers of the Lago Maggiore, or the breath of Italian winds, as those foreign birds give vent to their own musings. Perhaps they too, at the moment, are thinking of far-off shores, where,

with their free mates, they were wont in other days to sport among the waves.

Visions perhaps of the Red Sea, or of the Mountains of the Moon, may be passing over their brains as they utter those wild cries, or they may be thinking of their young, or of the days when they were young themselves, playing among the ponds and bushes of interior Africa.

XLV.

God knows how much or how little the inferior creation thinks; but I hope it has some ideas of places and persons to solace it in exile and captivity. We are wrong if we suppose it a mere piece of unthinking mechanism. It has an intelligible world of its own, however limited, and the Arabs, in their grand poetical flights, imagine it possible for human nature, by meditation and philosophy, to contract and reduce itself to dimensions sufficiently small to be introduced into the Katanthropomorphite world, and to hold communion with those classes of God's creatures which range below the level of reason.

They aimed particularly at discovering the language of birds, to which they attribute wonderful properties, because they soar to the high places of the earth, fly over oceans and deserts, visit the sources of rivers unknown to man, and in this way appear to be admitted into the remotest sanctuaries

of nature, where our boasted intelligence never penetrates.

XLVI.

I was now turning my back, perhaps for ever, on Italy, but did not experience on this account the slightest touch of melancholy; on the contrary, I would gladly have placed myself in a chariot, drawn by Lammergeyers, and darted like an arrow from the Lago Maggiore to Lausanne.

However, as those Alpine rovers were not my servants, I was compelled to tolerate the movements of the lumbering old diligence, which with its antediluvian contempt of time, toiled slowly up the steep. After some hours the moon arose, to reveal to all who choose with proper reverence to regard it, the ineffable beauty of our great mother.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the joys which God has prepared for them that love him. But those joys are not alone felt in heaven. It is the pleasure of God that they should sometimes be experienced on earth; for the marvels of his creation stand out in all their glory before the soul, and drench and inundate it with rapture.

I do not think the man to blame who is wanting in religious feeling; I think him infinitely to be pitied; for assuredly, all the concentrated delight of existence is lost for him. He stands in the midst

of infinite magnificence, and does not feel its majesty. His soul is, as it were, congealed, while breezes fraught with an inexpressible sense of joy float unconsciously over him. For myself, I do not pretend to be religious. I have never yet risen to the elevation which deserves such a name. But I do know and confess this, that there have been moments in my life, when the rapture of an archangel appeared to be imparted to me. And this night I speak of, when I was ascending the Alps, may be reckoned among the sweetest of my life. I would not have it thought, however, that the mere aspect of nature occasioned those holy sensations. It was the mysterious influence of human love blended, and interpenetrated by the divine that brought out all the sublimity of what I saw.

XLVII.

The moon, I have said, had risen, and her white light lay in quiet beauty upon all things. I descended from the diligence, and walked far ahead, to muse, and meditate, and enjoy the holiness of the scene alone. Far beneath me lay the Lago Maggiore, contracted by distance into a diminutive mirror, quivering and twinkling on the margin of Lombardy. Behind my back, as I looked down, the stupendous Alps reared their forms towards heaven. Far on the right and left innumerable lower eminences, in peaks or ridges, some bare, others clothed

with wood, extended in matchless beauty beneath the cerulean heaven.

It was the very heart of summer, and summer in those latitudes exerts an influence perfectly inexplicable over the thoughts and feelings. I walked on, and paused to gaze about me at intervals. By degrees the superstitions of the Alps suggested themselves to me, and I did not wonder that men should have imagined a spiritual creation to mount those lofty pinnacles and snowy table-lands, which even poetry itself has seldom visited, and never adequately described. I have no doubt, that I myself discover in this world of ours, beauties which many others do not see.

Great poets and philosophers, doubtless, discern other beauties invisible to me, and if a seraph descends occasionally from heaven, and places himself upon the pinnacles of the earth, to gaze around him, he, doubtless, perceives millions of beauties never rendered visible to mortal eyes. It is some persuasion of this truth that in every country gives rise to the belief that deserts, and mountains, and oceans, and vast ruins, are the dwelling-places of spirits, capacitated to enjoy all their loveliness.

What an ethereal brood did the genius of old Hellas let loose on the fields and woods, linking some of them to trees and fountains, concealing others in the depths of caves, others in rivers, while to others again the soft foam of the waves supplied a domicile and procreant cradle.

XLVIII.

If poetry would forget her swelling and gigantic words, and come in sober guise to my aid, I would endeavour to describe the thrilling succession of phenomena which illuminated my approach to Switzerland. Overhead the celestial Artemis, chaste Orion, and the Pleiades throwing her quivering arrows over the plain, till all heaven was inundated with her brightness.

Through a vista in the dazzling splendour, I caught with my mind's eye, a glimpse of the Mythologinos Latmos, where Endymion, in ineffable slumbers lay dreaming of his mistress with the silver bow, with his eyes open, as the Greek poet fables, that the goddess, as she sat by him, might enjoy their brilliance. From one mythe to another I wandered back over the infancy of the world till I beheld Eros moulding the elements into man, and thus putting an end to the empire of Chaos.

Suddenly while musing in this wild way, I was recalled to myself by a luminous appearance in the east. It was the first avant-courier of the dawn.

We delight in the genesis of all that is beautiful, in the springing up of young life, in the joyous advent of a soul upon the vast theatre of time. This is at once the greatest miracle, and the greatest beauty in the whole creation of God.

The birth of a living being, signifies when properly understood, the appearance of a new mirror from which God may behold his own image reflected, which he knows is a circle small at first, but increasing for ever, aiming at embracing all things and really comprehending most.

Next in beauty to the birth of man is the birth of day; and the Eilithuia that is present at it, seems with her at Delos, to usher a new god into the world.

I said I noticed a luminous appearance in the east, which looked at first like an arch of lightning quivering and playing over the horizon, and rising and enlarging every instant. All colours were there blended into one. A veil of saffron dashed with pearl enveloped the modest head of Eos. As she rose from the bed of Tithonos to gladden earth with her beauty, her blushes illuminated the sky. Around her, all the dwellers on Olympos appeared to extend in magnificent procession as she withdrew her veil and opened the vision of her loveliness upon the world. Immediately behind her came the fiery steeds of Helios caparisoned in purple and gold, inflaming earth and sky with their brightness, till the whole orient became one sea of molten splendour indescribable by language.

On one side below, stretched the ancient territories of the Roman republic, whose victorious eagles had swept over it from south to north with irresistible power. In those days the sun beheld

something worth looking at, even from heaven. The earth was then inhabited by men; who, as they fought and bled for liberty, murmured familiarly to themselves *sic iter ad astra.*

Rome in that phasis of her existence deserved to be an eternal city: and Italy from end to end was beautiful,—beautiful with the monuments of piety, beautiful with happy hearths and free homes, beautiful in war, beautiful in peace, the abode of victory and philosophy, heir to the arts of Greece, and the transmitter of civilization from the ancient to the modern world. But now let me turn to the Alps.

XLIX.

Whoever has been among them for ever so short a time, must have observed that rosy flush which encircles their summits in the early morning. All their peaks, far and near, were now illuminated with light, glowing, flashing, trembling, and changing colour as the sun ascended higher and higher into the heavens. It may be fortunate, or it may be otherwise, that such phenomena are fleeting: at any rate the state of mind in which we are able fully to enjoy them, is exceedingly transitory. Hunger soon comes, with its terrestrial associations to hurry us away from the sublime, to the breakfast parlour of some inn.

Luckily we were near *Domo d'Ossola*, and I was

content for a while to forget Alps, and skies, and all the golden legends of the mythology, over a table covered with coffee and buttered rolls.

After breakfast we continued the ascent. I had now two companions in the cabriolet—the one a Genoese merchant, the other a young Italian from Florence: both pleasant fellows, and inclined to illustrate the saying of Martial, "That a good companion is better than a coach."

L.

When the way became particularly steep, we got down and walked; and a hundred times since then, the sunny hours of that morning have come back in all their brightness upon my memory. During one of these walks, I observed among the passengers a new traveller. This was a lady, dressed in a green habit, who moved a little apart from the rest of the company. She proved to be a young French countess from Lyons, who, attended by a single maid, had been making the tour of Northern Italy. Her husband, from choice, she said, had remained at home. This lady, who had taken her place in the *coupé*, now contrived to persuade one of the Italians to make an exchange with her, and ascended the cabriolet to talk of France and French literature.

Her powers of conversation were entirely out of the common order. She was young, handsome,

gay, vain, and frivolous, and yet had contrived to lay in so large a stock of knowledge, that there were few topics on which she could not say something pointed and original. I would not, however, undertake to reproduce her remarks, because, when translated into English out of the imperfect chronicle of memory, they might not appear so new or sparkling as they then did to me. French women get credit for being good talkers, and so they often are; but in what the charm of their conversation consists, I have never been able to discover. In the present instance, my companion was really an uncommon person, whose studies had comprehended authors which few women, young or old, ever attempt to read. For example, she had not only read Montagne and Pascal, Mallebranche and Fénélon, but had familiarised herself, in translations, no doubt, with Plato, Æschylus, and Homer.

Sometimes, while discussing a passage of George Sand's "Letters of a Traveller," which by the way are not so well known as they ought to be in England, she would refer, exceedingly *à propos*, to another passage in Plato's "Book of Laws," or in the "Republic," or in the "Phædrus." Sometimes she would carry back the imagination to the "Odyssey," out of which she had selected pictures of rural life, which she could paint in the newest language of Paris. With all this she intermingled freely exhibitions of coquetry and badinage, sometimes relating anecdotes, sometimes describing

pictures, sometimes lifting the veil, not always too timidly, from the interior of French society.

I told her where I had been, what I had beheld, and with how great a degree of impatience I was hastening towards home. She was sufficiently versatile to sympathise with all sorts of sentiments, and entered with great skill and rapidity into every new phasis of thought. In ordinary circumstances I should have been greatly entertained by such a person; but lively and amusing as she was, I felt relieved when she left the diligence at Brigge to proceed towards German Switzerland.

LI.

There is, in fact, a time when the most amusing persons altogether cease to amuse. Very early in the evening I grew weary of my travelling companions, and retreated to my bedroom to think of home. Shortly afterwards the other travellers appeared to have done the same, so that the inn became perfectly still, and I was left alone with the night.

I had extinguished my candle to enjoy the darkness, and sat at the open window looking out upon the quiet stars. There are noises which belong exclusively to the night—gentle tickings in the wall, the chirping of crickets, the distant hooting of the owl, the flapping of the bat's wings as it brushes by through the slumbering air. On this

occasion stealthy footsteps now and then seemed to glide along the street, while from among the peaks of the Alps, on which I was languidly gazing, sounds like voices appeared to issue.

At such moments the mystery of life descends with all its weight upon the soul. What are we? whence do we come? and whither ultimately shall we go? I cannot read the thoughts of others; scarcely can I indeed, with any certainty, decipher my own. I only know that there are times when the thinking substance within me appears to dilate, till it is capable in dimensions of embracing the whole universe. The idea of God seems then to descend in all its majesty, and to fill every chamber of thought till the consciousness of sublimity raises us from the earth, and enables us to commune with eternity. We look at the vast elevations of the world, and, reflecting on their duration, ask ourselves, shall they survive us, or shall we, disembodied and glorified, survive them?

We know not what spirit we are of; I therefore almost fear to give utterance to my own reflections on this subject. But as they proceed from no impious sentiment, it cannot be wrong to confess that, contemplating it from this "bank and shoal of time," I always persuade myself that what must communicate its all-absorbing delight to immortality, will be the companionship of those we have loved on earth,—our wives, our children, our friends.

LII.

While sitting at that Alpine window, I reviewed my past life, and remembered that one spiritual torch, kindled as it were at my soul, was at that moment burning before the throne of God. Had it acquired the consciousness which it possessed not on earth? Had the infant existence been developed into maturity? If so, was it then permitted to look down upon me, and upon its mother, and to embrace us both in the wings of its angelic love?

I travelled onwards through Alps and valleys, and with my mind's eye, beheld a series of chambers, in which a number of kindred spirits were communing in sleep with the world beyond the grave. Should we again meet on earth? This question brings to mind the imperfections of our faith.

If we regard heaven as our final home, why do we regret and not rather congratulate those who reach it before us? Is it not that nature makes us tremble in presence of the Unknown? When we quit the warm precincts of the cheerful day, the green mantle and sunny smile of earth, to plunge into the cold abysses of space, we are ignorant of the road we are to take. Our thoughts, therefore, are soon beaten back towards the earth, where they would lose all elasticity, if not for the knowledge that God is present even here, and that travel where we will, we can never overstep the

bounds of his empire, or be beyond the protection of his love. As sleep would not come to me, I only lay down to indulge in reveries more at my ease.

LIII.

If you have ever returned, reader, from a long journey, and approached home in extreme doubt and anxiety, you will be able to comprehend with what feelings I rode on this fine June morning down the Valais.

The mountains and the sky were as grand and as bright as ever, but I saw them not. What I wished, yet dreaded to see, was a solitary, yet beautiful house on the shores of Lake Leman, embosomed in trees, and glittering with sunshine.

When I departed, I had left eight faces clouded and wet with tears: should I find the full number still there, or would there be any fearful gap in the bright chain of home? Hope whispered that all would be right, but still strong doubts came ever and anon, to disturb my thoughts and subdue a happiness which might otherwise have been too much to enjoy.

The driver of the diligence, a right good honest Swiss, to whom I had imparted the cause of my impatience, urged on his horses with unusual earnestness. He was himself a married man, with several children; and though he came back to them

at least twice a week, he assured me he never returned without a degree of eager anxiety lest something should have happened to them, or the good woman, their mother, during his absence. He could, well enough, therefore, he said, understand my feelings: he consequently drove on, much faster than usual, so that the diligence arrived at Lausanne two hours earlier than it had ever done before.

On inquiring in the town, I learned that my wife and all the children were in perfect health, but had removed to a more beautiful residence, named Belle Roche, a little further up the mountain. Imagine me, therefore, in a fiacre, driving at full speed through woods and lanes towards my own house, at which I thought we should never arrive. Yards seemed to expand into leagues, while minutes were protracted into years. At length, however, we dashed through a little walnut grove, and the carriage stopped at the foot of a long flight of steps.

While the coachman was descending slowly, to open the door, I leaped out through the window, and in another moment, was standing in the dining-room, embraced by eight pair of arms at once, and amid abundant exclamations of "pa! pa!" and tears of joy. Children, little and big, crowded round me, pulled me into a chair, climbed on my knees, on my shoulders; everywhere unable to express or repress their delight. And the baby I had left,—was

she not grown! were not her eyes larger, bluer, and more like her mother's! Did not the inherited golden hair hang in heavy ringlets about her brow, and round her neck! But I must not proceed. Here my narrative comes naturally to a close. No words would enable me to do justice to my own feelings; but among them was a deep and inextinguishable sense of gratitude to God for preserving so many lives, infinitely dearer to me than my own, and thus uniting us again on the blessed hearth—the holy altar of the affections—the birthplace of all that is brightest and most beautiful on earth.

THE END.

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